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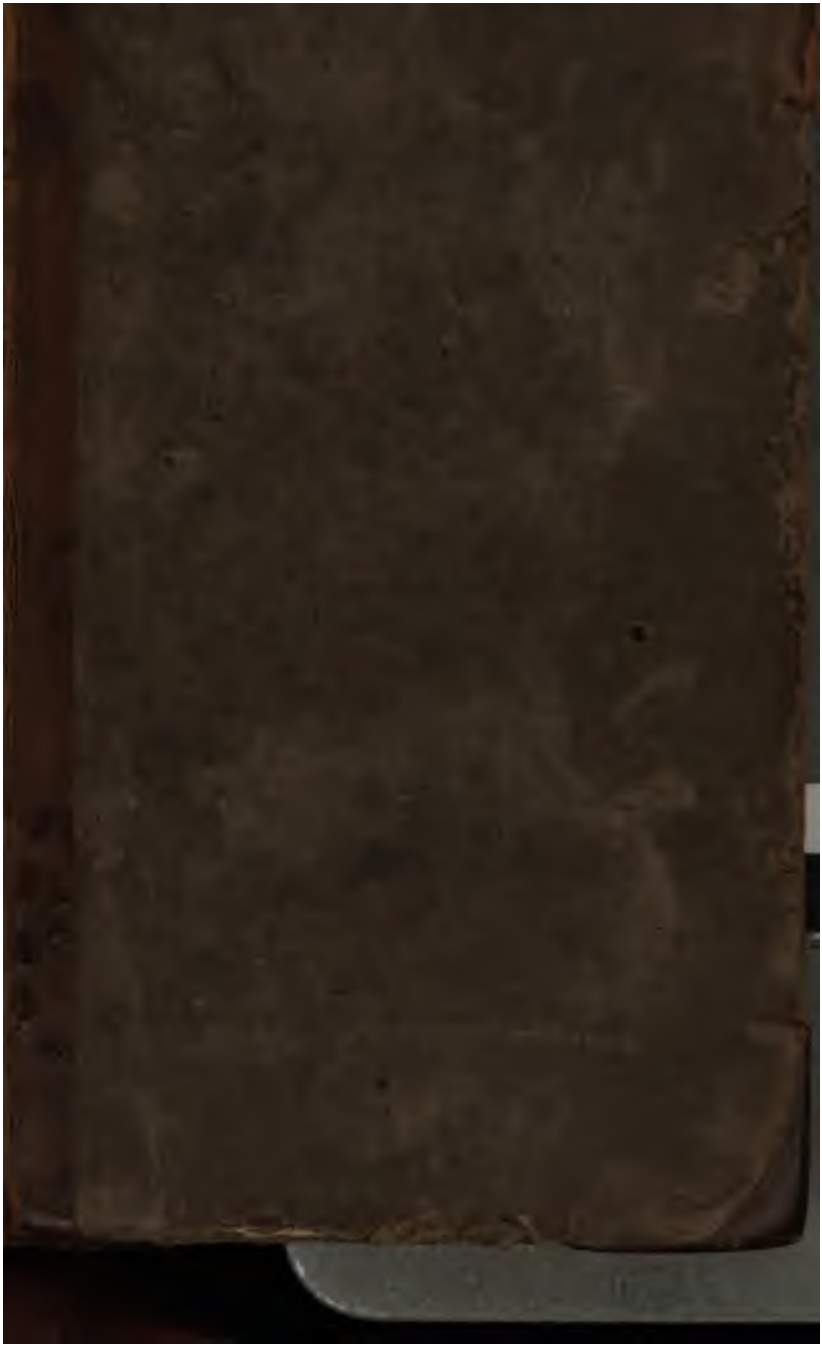

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GONDEZ,

THE MONK.

A Romance,

Of the Thirteenth Century.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By W. H. IRELAND,

AUTHOR OF THE ABBESS, &c. &c. &c.

----------Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelms them to men's eyes.

SHAKSPEARE.

VOL. I.

London:
PRINTED FOR W. EARLE, ALBEMARLE-STREET,
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DEDICATION.

(BY PERMISSION),

TO

Lumley St. George Skeffington, Esq.

OF SKEFFINGTON LODGE,

LEICESTERSHIRE.

THOU, who Parnassian heights aspir'st to climb,
To thee I dedicate my simple rhyme;
For thy advent'rous muse would soar, like mine,
And claim alliance with the heav'nly nine.
Thou for the Drama steer'st; I for Romance;
As some love reels, and some a country dance.
Thy recompence or dire damnation's this;—
The first applause ensures; the last a hiss.
My best reward is to be well repaid;
For after all, this writing's but a trade.

Apollo has his workmen, bright and dull;
Some fraught with genius—some of denser skull.
Now should I boast the first, my sterling lore
Must claim from every reader an *encore*;—
But, if devoid of brains should prove my head,
And 'stead of gold, I give them only lead;
The cheat with critic ken they'll bring to light,
And banish me by sentence *erudite*.

The case to such an issue having brought,
I gaz'd upon my volumes, lost in thought;—
Some author friend, said I, my judge shall be,
And instantly my mind selected thee;
So after some few hints which I shall give,
'Tis thou must judge if my vile monk should live.

Turrets so dreary, haunted by sage owls,
Convents inhabited by monks in cowls,
Rich monasteries filled with moping maids,
Caverns enchanted by weird witching jades,
Forests infested by fierce ruffian crews,
And damsels who the baron's wish refuse,
I sing indeed of these;—
For what, but Corridors and owls so sage,
Convents, and monks whose hairs are sear'd with age,
Maidens in love, that in drear dungeons mope,
Caverns, where witches give their art full scope,
Forests, where robbers bid the traveller halt,

And damsels who defy the dire assault,
What would ye more to please?

O! you shall hear a tale will make you start,
For never yet had monk so black a heart;
Never did owls and ravens scent such blood;
Never stood convent in so drear a wood;
Never was witch so foul, as you shall hear;
Never had damsel cause for so much fear
As her of whom I write;
Never before were heroes half so fine;
Never did virtue half so sweetly shine;
Never did Cupid aim so well his dart;
Never did each so well enact his part;
Monks, heroes, witches, lovers, nobles all—
The good, the bad, the fat, the short and tall,
Must fill ye with delight.

These things premised, in judgment be not rash,
Nor deem my Monkish Tale mere *modern trash.*
Taste ever varies;---and the Poet's art
Then best is shewn when most it wins the heart.
Our modern nymphs, however good and fair,
Might fail to please, drest as their mothers were;
But when in fashion's 'witching garb bedight,
Grace adds to grace, and charms with charms unite.
E'en so my tale, trick'd out in monkish guise,
May better please than tale more learn'd or wise.---

Venial the means, which moral truths impart,
To draw attention, please, and mend the heart.
If thus you think, you'll patronize my cause,
And gratify my soul by your applause.
Which done, I'll pledge what is by right your due,
The *word of honour*, so well known to you,
That I from henceforth will for aye remain,
Your Humble Servant o'er and o'er again.

PREFACE,

TO THE READER.

MY Dedication done,—with humble mind,
READERS, I now intreat you to be kind:
Your *former patronage* with joy I own,
And build my *present hope* on that alone.
Such gen'rous praise as bade my ABBESS live,
Now, to my MONK, with equal ardour give:
So shall your *fiat* fix my fate,—and claim
Increase of gratitude for added fame.
For fame *imprimis*, I wou'd have you learn,
Shou'd always weep beside the poet's urn.
Not that I wish, when dead, a marble bust,
For marble will not animate the dust.
I seek not fame that's stiff, cold, deaf, and blind;
The fame I court concentrates in the mind.
And, yet, how many marble cherubs mourn
When pamper'd vice from life is justly torn!
How many sculptur'd forms will weep the dead!
With just such marble drops as they once shed

How many gain, by rapine and by blood,
A marble effigy, that stamps them good!

Such merit claims my Lord's poetic brain,
His nonsense passes, for he seeks no gain;
His well-bound book presented is for nought,
And then his Lordship is a genius thought;
The publisher loud trumpet's his renown,
My Lord's then dubb'd a wit by half the town.

You'll doubtless ask me, and with some surprize,
What merit has the work that's fram'd on lies?
What wholesome information can be found,
Where ev'ry character treads magic ground?

To this objection, as the Author, I,
Your scruples will attempt to satisfy.—
From birth, thro' ev'ry scene mankind we'll trace,
'Twill then appear if I his sense debase.
First, then, the *infant* mind has no employ,
He cries, he laughs, and breaks the gilded toy.
For play, in *childhood*, ev'ry thing's forsook,
The tinsel'd bauble and instructive book.
Two stages these, in which it may be said,
That fiction neither taints the heart nor head.
Next we arrive at that most trying age,
Which mars or makes us with the prying sage;

'Tis then we feel the glowing stamp of youth,
And seldom estimate the voice of truth;
When sound, not sense, is pleasing to the ear,
And terrors gratify, that chill with fear;
When for the marvellous we feel inclin'd,
And nought but wonders can delight the mind.

An Author's outline shou'd not then be nice,
Let him ~~abhorror~~ with the form of vice;
Let boldness check the ardent youth's desire;
For only that can tame th'impetuous fire.
Let sin appear in foulest garb array'd,
And from the picture youth will start afraid.

'Tis he who paints foul Sin in Virtue's guise,
That shows the false perspective to our eyes:
For then we gaze enraptur'd on the sight,
As when the harlot lures us in the night.
Paint, dress, and impudence, the cheat conceal;
We lick, like lambs, the hand that grasps the steel.
But had the monster, met us undisguis'd,
The loathsome object must have been despis'd;
And pangs, which from that intercource arose,
Wou'd not have marr'd tranquillity's repose.
With years the blood grows calmer, and command
Devolves, at length, into cool Reason's hand;

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A marble effigy, that stamps them good!

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And pangs, which from that intercourse arose,
Wou'd not have marr'd tranquillity's repose.
With years the blood grows calmer, and command
Devolves, at length, into cool Reason's hand;

Romance then read; is half bereft of charm,
Sense at the fiction instant sounds th'alarm;
We merely read to pass an idle hour,
Nor heed the Monk's, the ghost's, or witch's pow'r.

Old age ensues,—Time casts on all a blot;—
Fiction and folly are, alike, forgot.
'Gainst Death we strive the dregs of life to save,
And, struggling, fall into the yawning grave.

Now tell me, gentle reader, where's the fault,
Tho' moral lessons be with fiction fraught:
Virtue, howe'er disguis'd, shall Virtue be;
And Vice shall shew its own deformity.
The one shall conquer each opposing ill,
And baffle all the other's hell-fraught skill.
By precept and example I will teach,
This sacred truth,—what more can Doctors preach?—
That vice, uncheck'd, its own sure curse will prove,
And virtuous actions lead to peace and love.

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GONDEZ,

THE MONK.

CHAP. I.

'Twas there I learn'd the untun'd song of war;
There coursed the bristly-mane'd and foaming steed,
With fire-spitting eye, and trampling hoofs;
Upon whose back bestrode a Scottish knight.
Unnumber'd were the valiant foes he slew
Of England's hardy youths.——
How many pedigrees and *Cotes d'Armures*,
Beneath his nerved arm were blotted out!
Whilst foaming from his horse's flanks ran down
The blood of all their proud nobility.

HENRY II.

Yea, this man's brow, like to a title leaf,
Fortels the nature of a tragic volume.

SHAKESPEARE.

NOW raged on every side the direful battle's carnage: the reeking car of Mars scour'd swiftly o'er the blood-stain'd field, while on his nodding crest en-

throned, sat hungry death, who seemed triumphantly to animate the furious combatants on either side.

But fortune smiled upon the English host, and all the valour of the Scottish clans was humbled by the fury of the British lion.

The brave Sir Edward Bruce, borne on his foaming war-steed, strove on every side with unbridled valour; when suddenly the young Lord Walter, accompanied by Randolph Earl of Murray, rode furiously towards him, and exclaimed aloud:—

"Spur, spur your courser, good Sir Edward, or your bold brother Robert, who enacts prodigies of valour, must fall into the hands of the victorious enemy."

Rous'd at the call, Sir Edward instantly joined his friends, and spurring his horse

over the dead and dying, forced his way through the English ranks, and soon arrived to be a witness of his brother's iminent danger.

Surrounded by a host of England's fiercest sons, the valiant and the good King Robert Bruce, nerv'd with the fury of a hunted tiger, opposed himself to death in every shape. Beside him fought sturdily the bold Laird Douglas, fearless of every surrounding peril, and anxious only to rescue his Monarch from the impending danger; at the right hand of this noble, the youthful Huberto Avinzo, displayed a valour almost supernatural. Thrice had he already rescued from the surrounding foe, the captive person of King Robert Bruce, and at the moment of Sir Edward's arrival, he rushed in front of the King's steed, and with heroic magnanimity received upon his upraised shield, the death-dooming falchion of the stout Earl of Pembroke, commander

of the English forces, which must have levelled with the earth the pride of Scotia, its much adored chief; whose arm was, at that critical juncture, opposed to the united efforts of three opponents.

By the timely inteference of those nobles, King Robert Bruce, Laird Douglas, and Huberto Avinzo, were happily rescued from the impending danger; on every side, however, victory proclaimed itself in England's favour, the Scottish clans were put to flight in every direction, and speeded from the field with the utmost precipitation; while their shrill bugles, mournfully sounded to the winds the unfortunate retreat.

It was with the utmost difficulty that King Robert was prevailed upon to seek for safety in immediate flight; swayed, however, by the urgent council of his friends, he made with speed towards an adjoining forest; accompanied only by

those chosen leaders, who had so signally aided his cause in defiance of every danger, together with the magnanimous youth Huberto Avinzo, whose wayward fate now led him to become one of the principal supporters of the drooping cause of King Robert Bruce.

Thus terminated the bloody and fatal battle of Methven, which seemed to blight for ever the hope of Scotia's hardy sons, by reducing to the most perilous and abject situation their noble King, Robert Bruce, the patron of merit, the friend of virtue, the pride of Mars, and the darling idol of every Scottish soul.

The dusky veil of evening began to obscure the last bright gleam of fading day, as the Monarch and his downcast friends, borne on the wings of flight, wound through the intricate mazes of the forest. Already had the clangor of the English trumpets, the shouts of the

pursuers, and the yells of the pursued faded on the listning ears of the fugitives; when, suddenly, King Robert checking the fleetness of his courser, addressed his friends, as follows:—

"Yoke-fellows in arms, and dearest friends, our struggles for the freedom of our native land, might perhaps, in the eyes of many, entitle us to better fortune. We have stoutly fought it, inch by inch; we have bled, and freely too, in Scotland's cause; yet, such you see, my lords, is the adverse chance of war. But, I conjure ye, in the fond name of hope, which ever befriends the lowly and distressed; suffer not the gloom of unavailing despondency to counteract those glorious energies which still inhabit your untainted souls. 'Tis true that we are now become the veriest outcasts that ere inhaled the breath of life; yet still remember friends, the strife is glorious, for our cause is good, nor can I

doubt that ultimate succour from above, which, though for a time concealed, still works imperceptibly in virtue's cause.—To each here present I owe the preservation of that life I now enjoy; but more particularly unto thee, Huberto, whose personal safety has been so often staked for my preserving; and trust me therefore, while I yet can boast such friends, dejection shall not mar the vigour of the man.—No; the dear liberty of my land I'll still maintain, and either permanently fix my Scotia's freedom, or, in the contest, sacrifice that life which is in slavery, unworthy my enjoying.

"Chance has compelled us thus to fly the field of Methven; 'tis therefore, now befitting, that we should determine whither 'twere most expedient for us to direct our course.—What say you lords?—Speak, brother Edward; for now like wanderers on a trackless heath we stray, we know not whither."

" In such an exigency," replied Sir Edward, " concealment is the only plan to be adopted."

" To this we must have immediate recourse," replied the Earl of Murray, " from which we may be enabled, by secret means, to apprize our friends and true adherents, of the measures necessary to be pursued, in order to our once more facing the hitherto victorious enemy."

" Curses light upon the English crest!" exclaimed the Laird Douglas, with vehemence, " let not the name of victory be coupled with the hateful race; it galls my very soul, when I recall to my remembrance, that my two brothers were ignominiously butchered on the block, and that a wife, dear to me as existence, and a daughter, the pledge of our mutual affections, the safety of whom I prize as much as glory and my native land, are still at haughty Edward's mercy.—

Almighty God! that thus the wife and daughter of a Scottish Douglas should wear proud England's galling fetters, and within their London's walls pine away in melancholy captivity."

"Calm, Laird Douglas, I intreat, this vehemence of temper," said the young Lord Walter, "cease, I beseech you, for the present, this unavailing flow of passion: in the name of friendship I conjure you to recollect, that it is your counsel, and not your rage, which is, in the present instance, requisite."

"I yield, I yield, my friend," replied Laird Douglas, "but ah! the shaft of hatred's *here*: it rankles in my heart."

"If I may be permitted to hazard an opinion at this distressing juncture," said the youthful Huberto, "we should forthwith speed, even in the very track which propitious fate seems purposely to have

led us in. We now incline toward the Western Isles, and soon entangled in the intricate passes, may bid defiance to pursuit. Let us then to the islands of the Hebrides, in one of which, safely concealed, we may confidently laugh to scorn the machinations of the foe, and plan such operations as must eventually frustrate their designs."

"Thanks, generous youth," replied the King, "thanks, Huberto, as sage in council as renowned in war: what say you friends? Can any here amend Avinzo's kind advice?"

"We are agreed," reiterated every tongue, "and owe our gratitude for Huberto's care." "To merit such a recompence," replied the youth, "my life itself were scarcely a sufficient compensation."

"We know thy truth," continued the

Monarch, " and all our loves are thine. Come friends, now speed we forward towards the west.—Be God our stay, and Hope the rallying word.—On friends, and let the termination of our journey be Oronza's secret isle."

Scarcely had King Robert finished the concluding words, when every courser's side felt the keen rowel of the goading spur, and laving the iron bit with foam, plunged forward with the rapidity of lightning.

The bright lamp of jocund day was now extinguished, and the pale-eyed goddess of silent night broke in melancholy majesty through the ebon dark, and shed around her partial light. The sullen winds arose, which, gradually dispersing the murky canopy of clouds, left to the wondering eye of contemplation, the countless beauties of immeasurable space. There Venus glittered

in brightest lustre, and all the dazzling host of Heaven shot forth their scintillating lights, lacing the wide expanse of dark ethereal blue with gemmy brightness.

Various and contending were the ideas that took possession of the mind of each thoughtful fugitive; yet, there was not an individual bosom but glowed with the god-like thirst of Fame, the love of Virtue, the freedom of their Sovereign, and the hope of giving liberty to Scotland's valiant clans.

For two successive days and nights King Robert Bruce and his followers continued on their route, scarcely making the necessary halt for the change of horses, and the taking that nutriment, of which, from their harrassed state, they stood in so much need. At length, towards the decline of the third day, they arrived in safety on the shores of the

Sound of Jura, where, quitting horse, a bark transported them immediately to that island, which, having traversed, they again entered a vessel, and steered towards Oronza's Isle.

Day's jocund face no longer beam'd in resplendent majesty upon the western horizon, the rays had sunk below the surface of the deep, and a threatning gloom overspread the vaulted canopy of Heaven; loud howled the northern blast, the surge rose high its curling head, and dashed in foaming fury against the little bark, which wafted o'er the angry flood the luckless King of Scotland and his tried companions.

In vain the boatmen strove against the fury of the overwhelming current: their strength availed them but little when opposed to the combined assaults of adverse winds and angry waves. One moment the vessel plunging into a yawn-

ing gulph, seemed lost for ever; then struggling with the billows, it rose again, to meet once more a watery tomb.

Thus, every second seemed to threaten instantaneous death, till each exhausted, abandoned the bark to the rude sport of the tempestuous elements.

The dauntless Monarch and his chosen friends, armed with blessed tranquillity of soul, the certain companion of conscious rectitude, awaited in silence the dreadful behest of fate; when fostering Providence kindly wrought what every mortal effort combined, had vainly strove to accomplish.

The angry surge, at Heaven's command, drove to the shore the splitting vessel, restoring once more to land these outcast children of misfortune.

Each, with true devotion, first paid tribute to the protecting hand of the Most High, and then stretched upon the turf his wearied frame, o'ercome by lassitude and the rude assaults of the pitiless winds and waves.

CHAP. II.

I ne'er was superstitious, and defy
All babbling augurs, and fell omens dire,
That oft appal the human soul.
Yet, there's a heavy something at my heart,
A secret summons that yells out—*Beware!*
Well, well, let grizzly terror freeze this breast,
Chill the warm tide that rushes through my veins;
Make dead this sight, and numb these pliant joints,
Still all his malice doth my soul defy,
Still all his horrors shall not make me shrink,
Nor sue for mortal life—when by the change
I gain a glorious immortality.

W. H. I.

BORNE upon the hollow blast of night, a sound was heard that died in melancholy cadence on the listning ear. —It was the solemn bell of Oronza's monastery that tolled in melancholy accents the dreary hour of midnight. The knell was grateful to the harrassed souls of King Robert and his trusty fol-

lowers, each of whom involuntarily arose, animated with the same desire of conducting the Monarch to some asylum where he might receive the attentions that were consonant with his dignity, and also experience such succour as his then exhausted state, both mental and bodily, so much required.

Each noble having tendered his best service to his adored Sovereign, the King arose, and reclining on the arms of the Lord Walter and the Earl of Murray, followed the other partners of his flight; who slowly bent their steps in that direction, from whence, at intervals, the brazen knell proceeded.

After advancing for a short period, they found themselves on the skirt of a gloomy wood, which, owing to the almost impenetrable darkness of the night, appeared to extend, its sable foliage, in every direction.

Fearful lest the intricacies of the forest might mislead them, by the persuasion of Laird Douglas, the King and the remaining noblemen made a halt; while he, accompanied by the young Huberto Avinzo, entered the wood, to find out if possible any beaten track; but, after much labour, the research proved fruitless: and, on rejoining King Robert, they were all compelled to submit to the alternative of forcing a passage through this unfrequented part of the forest. The rain, though much abated, continued to fall plentifully; and the gusts of murmuring wind, forcing a passage through the umbrageous foliage, produced at intervals a moaning sound, which contributed to the horrors of the surrounding gloom.

Avinzo, who, with the Laird Douglas, proceeded foremost of the party, at length descried, through an opening of the wood, a faint gleam of light, which

obviously proceeded from the lofty arched casement of some venerable monastic pile. This intelligence was joyfully communicated to the Monarch, who, with the fatigued partners of his ill fortune, instantly bent their steps towards the edifice.

On a nearer approach, the fabric proved to be a monastery, which, from the vast extent of ground it occupied, appeared to be a building of considerable consequence. On gaining the surrounding walls, the aperture from whence the dim gleam had issued, proved to be one of the numerous casements which gave light to the northern angle of the chapel, where the inmates of the monastery were then solemnizing the midnight vespers.

The painted casement, through which but partially shot the blaze of innumerable tapers burning within, contrasted finely with the ebon hue of the surround-

ing foliage, and produced an awful effect, which was in a great measure augmented by the imperfect sound of the baser notes of the religious chaunters, which gained at intervals the attentive ears of the forlorn Sovereign and his fellow fugitives, filling the pensive mind of every listner with an indescribable gloom, to which his soul had ever till then been estranged.

After slowly proceeding to the extremity of the chapel wall, another projecting part of the main building presented itself, which was lost in the sombre distance. Still guided by this angle, the party advanced; and about midway arrived at the grand arched portal of the monastery, which had been screened from observation by the projecting bastions of the edifice.

Sir Edward Bruce advancing, was upon the point of sounding at the gate for admittance, when the King, suddenly

loosening himself from the supporting arms of the young Lord Walter and the Earl of Murray, seized hastily that of Sir Edward, exclaiming—

" Hold, my dear brother! nor rashly think of craving succour here till you have received from me the counsel which I have to impart.—I know not wherefore, but something there is lies heavy on my soul;—I pray you, therefore, remember each of you, that I your Monarch must not be thought the partner of your flight; call me what name ye will, but let the tale be simply as follows:—That we are all true gentlemen and of note, who, upon the King's defeat at Methven, have hither fled for refuge and for safety; as the Sovereign of England, even in these our Scottish islands, hath secret friends and emissaries. I pray you, therefore, let us have recourse to caution, and sound the inhabitants of this vene-

rable pile ere we confide to them the secret of our real quality."

Sir Edward and the rest all bowed assent; when instantly the massive knocker resounded on the brazen plate, sending forth a discordant din that harshly echoed through the lofty halls of the building.

After the lapse of a few seconds, the slow and measured tread of footsteps were heard; and presently, through a small grating in the door, a surly voice addressed the fugitives to the following effect.

"Who, and what are ye that intrude at this untimely hour upon the sworn votaries of religion and their God?—Begone! 'tis now mid vesper chaunt; and it is our Abbot's strict command that none be here admitted to break

unseasonably upon the worship of the Most High."

"Good father," replied the Monarch, "we do not seek to break upon your holy purposes; for we would most gladly join our orisons with your's. What we desire is that which most gives satisfaction to the Divinity, when freely offered from the heart:—we only claim your charity."

The same harsh voice then gruffly answered from within—"You lose your labour; go and seek elsewhere, that comfort, of which you stand in need."

At that moment the retiring sound of the monk's footsteps was heard; when Sir Edward Bruce, advancing to the grating, cried aloud—

"For mercy, holy father! do not bar your doors upon us: we are no common

herd that claim your benison and protection; we are all gentlemen of note, but now unhappy fugitives, that fought at Methven for our land and King, and shared like him the bitter fate of adverse fortune."

The footsteps once more approached the portal, when thus bespoke the monk.

"Speak! what men are ye?"

"Knights in the service of King Robert Bruce," reiterated Sir Edward.

All was silent during some seconds, when the massive bolts were at length withdrawn, and the clank of chains echoed within; the lofty portal then moving on its hinges, displayed an extensive hall, imperfectly illuminated with dimly burning lights, ranged at regular distances against the walls; upon the pavement rested a brass lamp, which the father first

reared above the level of his brow, and then proceeded to examine, by its glare, the several persons of the fugitives.—The glance of the monk was scrutinizing, and every trait of severity characterized his gloomy physiognomy.

Having concluded this cautious perusal of their features, the monk, with the motion of his hand alone, beckoned them to advance; and as the Monarch and his nobles followed the father's footsteps, they again heard the gate closed too by a second monk of the order, who had, till that moment, escaped all observation.

Having traversed the hall, they entered a chamber still more dreary; where the monk, advancing to an oaken bench, motioned the Monarch and his followers to be seated. Having complied in silence, the father retired by another entrance, at the opposite extremity of the

apartment, which, from the gleam that issued from the lamp he bore, appeared to communicate with a long suite of apartments, equally desolate with that which was then occupied by the Monarch and his companions.

As the palid ray faded in the distance, each sharer of his Sovereign's fate was most anxiously desirous to communicate his thoughts on the singularity of the reception they had experienced; but the taciturnity of the King proved a sufficient check to their desire; but each mentally exclaimed—"Can this be a symbol of religious charity? Is this the balmy comfort which its votaries proffer to the abject children of misfortune? Instead of brotherly affection, a gloomy mistrust was graven on the front of our conductor; and his manners were as cold, repulsive, and comfortless as the internal appearance of this sanctified abode."

The Monarch, it is true, experienced but too deeply this train of thinking; yet that soon gave way to ideas more weighty.

"If," thought he, "the Superior be the model from which his creatures frame their mode of conduct, this can be no safe asylum for me.—For where suspicion lurks, and seeks to hide her guilty head, there too, lies concealed the cankered heart: 'tis candour stamps indelibly the soul's integrity; without it, premeditated villainy bars the access to smiling virtue, and crime but leads to crime."

Once more the sound of footsteps broke upon the dreary silence; and, in a few seconds, the same father appeared, followed by another of the order. As they approached, the King and his nobles bent each a look of astonishment on the person of the new visitant. His appearance was particularly meagre, and

his stature far above the common level; the crown of his head, which was bald, forcibly contrasted itself with the jet colour of his hair, which was cropped short behind, and scarcely covered a third part of his forehead; his features, though human, had in them something so inexpressibly terrific as to appal the gaze of observation; two eyes large and glaring, a thin aqualine nose, cheek-bones remarkably high, and a mouth, whose lips through paleness, seemed but a part of this petrifying countenance, the whole of which, overspread with the livid complexion of death, formed the characteristic features of this horrible figure.

The drapery of this father consisted of a dark brown robe, that swept along the white pavement, and hung in loose folds around his meagre limbs, while a cord slightly encircled his loins, and a broad cross of white appeared upon his breast.——Such was the object that

made a halt within some few paces of his astonished observers.

Having spoken in a whisper to the father who preceded him, the lamp was placed upon the pavement, and the lay friar, bowing with apparent humility, retired back some steps; when the stranger, raising his right arm and pressing the fore-finger upon his lip, advanced with slow and measured step, passing and re-passing before the King and his nobles, on whom he bent his scowling eyes, as if with an intent to read the workings of their inmost souls.

This extraordinary ceremony concluded, he paused before the person of the King; and, after a silence more expressive than even language itself, addressed him thus:—

"You say, Sir Knight, from Methven hither you have steered your course, to

seek a refuge from the conquering foe.—King Bruce is then defeated?"

To whom the Sovereign firmly thus replied—"The Monarch, and we his followers, have shared the fate of battle. We fought; were conquered: but, I trust, shall soon retrieve those laurels which we have not ingloriously lost."

—"You love the King?"

—"None better, I dare avouch: the cause of Robert Bruce boasts not a sturdier friend than I."

—"How fares his Majesty?"

—"Doubtless as other Monarchs fare, when transitory evils cross them. Opposed to adverse fate, he has a kingly spirit; and therefore, I suppose, will bear misfortune as befits such magnanimity."

The Monk paused a while, with downcast look; then suddenly raising his eyes, and fixing them full upon the King, exclaimed, with an elevated voice and mysterious inclination of the head—

"And, wert *thou* the King, what course would'st *thou* pursue?"

—"Fight, till I regained my crown and Scotland's liberty."

With eyes still fixed upon the Monarch, the father paused awhile, then slowly bent his steps towards the entrance of the chamber. The lay-friar, at his approach, raised the lamp with intent to conduct him as before; but the Monk, with out-stretched arm, forbad him, and his form soon disappeared in the surrounding gloom.

King Robert, at this juncture, arose; and advancing to the father, requested

to be made acquainted with the titular saint of the monastery, and the name of its superior. To which interrogatory, it was with some difficulty the Monarch gained this answer :—

The convent is dedicated to St. Columba, and Gondez is the name of its Abbot. The King, farther expressing a desire to see the superior, the monk thus replied :—

" Think you, Sir Knight, that the holy Abbot of Columba's monastery, will be led from his austere duties by the calls of a stranger? You mistake the person of the sanctified Gondez; the presence of a Monarch, would not actuate him to relax, for a moment, in his religious avocations. He must, indeed, be bold, that dares intrude upon his meditations.— Even our holy brother, John of Dunbar, who but now retired, would shrink from

such procedure, though he is the bosom friend of our Abbot."

"The bosom friend of the Abbot! reiterated the King."

The concluding words of the monk, had petrified the Monarch, who from the strong and impressive impulse of the moment, could not restrain the involuntary exclamation; after which, lost in contemplation, he resumed his seat beside the person of Laird Douglas.

During some time they remained in this unpleasant state of suspence, wh[illegible] a third father entering the chamber, a[illegible] quainted them that food was spread upon the board; after which, cells were ready for their repose.

The wearied fugitives arose and followed, in silence, the steps of their conductor, who ushered them into an apart-

ment where such provision as the monastery afforded was spread for the unfortunate guests.

In the course of the repast several monks entered and retired from the chamber, all uniformly maintaining a similar gloomy reserve, and every thing being conducted in the same inhospitable manner. Actuated by this conduct, the Sovereign and his friends, fearful of betraying themselves in the smallest degree to their observant attendants, followed a mode of procedure in some degree consonant with that of their hosts; and thus concluded the cheerless meal; after which, every guest was separately conducted to his bed of mat.

Any endeavour to pourtray the mental feelings of each fugitive, when stretched upon his couch of rush, would prove inadequate; each felt alike, a strange

foreboding of something unaccountable, at which nature revolted.

Huberto Avinzo, more particularly, experienced a repugnant horror; which, notwithstanding the dauntless mind he inherently possessed, unnerved, in a great measure, his wonted magnanimity.

"Whence arises," he exclaimed, as he reclined upon his mat, "this unaccountable horror? each object in this mansion, which should inspire my soul with thoughts of peace, is fraught with terrors that appals me."

As Avinzo spoke, the wind, as if in unison with his lugubre thoughts, moaned through the grated casement above. He remained for a length of time restless, and then arose weary of this continued sleepless state, and the gloomy contemplations that unceasingly pervaded his imagination.

As Huberto traversed the vaulted apartment, the moon at intervals peeped through the watery clouds that swiftly sailed along, impelled by the current of the hollow rushing wind.

On a minute inspection of the chamber, within a nich upon a small altar, rested a crucifix, which seemed to present itself, as a reproof for Avinzo's remissness, who instantly falling prostrate at the shrine, breathed the warm effusions of a virtuous soul; which not only dissipated every appalling horror, but brought from heaven the chearing balm of gentle and renovating sleep, to sooth care-worn mind, and give new vigour to that natural bodily strength, which was nearly exhausted by the puissant arm of all-subduing fatigue.

CHAP. III

My gracious Lord, that which I would discover,
The law of friendship bids me to conceal;
But, when I call to mind your gracious favours
Done to me, undeserving as I am;
My duty pricks me on to utter that
Which else no worldly good should draw from me.

The Cherub, gazing in my face,
Renewed past scenes to friendship dear;
My mind recalled the father's grace,
While pity shed the silent tear.

W. H. I.

HUBERTO Avinzo, who so signally aided the cause of Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, and so often preserved him from impending danger, was by birth an Italian; but to his fate there was annexed so much mystery, as to render every idea of tracing his family or connections utterly impossible.

In early infancy, Huberto had been brought to Scotland by a native of Rome, whose phisiognomy and manners stamped him above the common level, though his outward habillaments by no means tended to strengthen such a suggestion. These latter however, were, in all probability, assumed in order to disguise his real rank from the eye of observation; and this opinion was further strengthened by the profusion of riches he possessed. This guardian of Avinzo bore the appellation of Alzarro; and scarcely appeared to have attained his thirtieth year.

During the continuance of this stranger at Edinburgh, with the then infant Huberto Avinzo, his courteous manners, but more particularly the consideration of his being an absolute stranger in that city, endeared him to the family and kindred of Sir Alan Macdonald; who, notwithstanding, acquired not the small-

est knowledge of the family or connections of Alzarro, or the infant Huberto Avinzo. This continued silence and reserve did not, however, tend to diminish Sir Alan's predilection in his favour, which even led him to introduce Alzarro at the Court of Alexander the Third, the then reigning Monarch of Scotland, where every marked attention was, in consequence, paid to him.

After a twelvemonth's continuance at Edinburgh, dispatches were suddenly received by Alzarro, from Rome; the contents of which seemed to operate most forcibly on his feelings, and an immediate gloom characterized his whole conduct. This continued for some days; when, one evening, after having evinced, by his every action, a more than ordinary restlessness of mind, he thus, in private, addressed himself to Sir Alan Macdonald:—

"The generosity of your conduct, Sir Alan, in having thus befriended a total stranger, shall remain for ever stamped upon the tablet of my soul.—Would to Heaven that I were now permitted to reveal the impenetrable mystery which shrouds the fate of the luckless infant Huberto Avinzo;—but that is impossible. I am bound to secresy, and cannot therefore, degrade myself in my own esteem, by forfeiting the confidence reposed in me. As far, Sir Alan, as I am at liberty to speak, you shall command my confidence; for you, of all beings, have the most indisputable claim on my candour. Five years are now elapsed, since first Huberto breathed the vital air; misfortune, ere that hour, attended on his hapless mother; and when she gave him to the world, it was but to strain him to her breaking heart, and bid her offspring an eternal adieu.—The noble youth whom this dear child claims for his

father, was the friend of my infant days, which dear constancy of attachment ripened with our manhood, and I became the partner of his pleasures, the sharer of his disquietudes, and the sad partaker of his luckless fortune. Know then, Sir Allan, that Alzarro is not my name; that Huberto Avinzo is but an assumed appellation for the child, who, from either parent, boasts a noble lineage. Know also, that from impending and certain death I preserved this dear pledge of the most pure and sacred love; and for its salvation fled my native country.—It was a tribute due to feeling, honour, and my friend."

Here Alzarro concealing his face with one hand, and pressing with the other, that of Sir Alan Macdonald, shed a copious flood of tears, which had almost stifled his voice, as he gave utterance to the concluding words of his address. Having, for a time, yielded to this per-

turbation of the soul, he thus continued his harangue:—

"I have now unburthened to you, Sir Alan, as much as my integrity to my beloved friend will permit. You are now, in some measure, enabled to judge of the secret which preys upon my soul; and nothing, but the conviction of your honour, and the friendship I have experienced from you, could have drawn it from me. But, if I have already found you the generous friend, I have yet to trespass on your bounty;—yes, I have still to sue for a continuance of your protection towards the helpless infant Huberto Aviuzo, since, by the late communications received from Rome, imperious necessity demands my speedy return thither: although painful the alternative, yet I am compelled to leave behind me this darling offspring of my beloved friend. My absence will not, I trust, prove of any very long duration; but, as to the

precise period of my return it is impossible for me to speak, as I shall be occupied on affairs of no common nature. This, Sir Alan, is the request I have to make, in the name of the truest parental affection, in the name of unprotected innocence, and that unalterable regard which I entertain for your character."

Sir Alan Macdonald, pressing with warmth the hand of Alzarro, whose tears again stole copiously down his manly cheek, replied:—

"The Christian's duty is to afford relief to the necessitous, and extend the fostering hand to afflicted innocence; therefore, Alzarro, I not only receive this strong—this gentle pledge of your esteem, with the warmest effusions of pleasure, but also gratefully acknowledge the trust which Heaven so sacredly binds me to fulfil. I have long—very long, sighed for such a charge, since it

will give to me what fate has yet denied:—a lovely child, which I may rear and foster as my own."

Alzarro, having testified his warmest gratitude by every emotion that speaks the feeling heart, quitted Sir Alan's presence; and, on the ensuing day, every arrangement being completed in order to his departure, he retired in the evening to his chamber with the child Huberto, where, after closing too the arras, and seating himself, he placed the child upon his knee; and then, fixing his streaming eyes, with tenderness, on his infant features, he thus exclaimed:—

"Dear pledge of tenderest love, how every lineament now calls the blended sweetness of thy hapless parents to my aching recollection. Oh fate! let me not arraign thy justice; and yet, what crime has this dear innocent committed, that it should thus remain unconscious

of a father's and a mother's tenderness. Perhaps they sleep in death, and all their agonies at once are buried in the oblivion of the grave! With me now rests the agonizing task of braving all the woes they have endured, and learning whether the hand of fate has severed them from life for ever: but there is a comfort still; for thou, dear boy, in thy green infancy, displayest thy father's honour, gentleness, and truth: even in thine infant sports have I observed thee, when all thy mother's sweetness curbed the dawning spirit in thy tender breast."

After imprinting on Huberto's lips a kiss of ecstacy, while the boy, intently gazing on Alzarro, caressed his hand, and watched his every motion, he thus continued:—

"Sweet child, I quit thee for a time; yet, my Avinzo, remember well the lessons I have taught thee. Be merciful to

all; nor harm the creature that's beneath thee. Spurn every action which thou canst not love; and place no faith but in that power, to whom, both night and morn, thou raisest thy clasped hands, and offerest up the prayer of gratitude. Be to Sir Alan, as hitherto thou hast been to me, and he will prove himself a parent to thy unprotected innocence: let an unbounded love to all be ever foremost in thy thoughts; nor even seek to harm the being that would wrong thee."

The tears that had collected in Huberto's eyes burst forth as he further exclaimed:—

"Sure, you are my father; for you have taught me so to love you, that I shall never feel what hatred is to any one."

"I take thy promise, my dear boy," exclaimed Alzarro, as he clasped Avin-

zo's little hands, at the same time raising his eyes to Heaven;—"yes, I receive it as the type of thy inherent virtue."

After once more pressing Huberto with fervor to his breast, he forthwith led the child to the chamber where Sir Alan and the Lady Macdonald attended his coming; and, having solemnly delivering up Avinzo to their care, Alzarro bad adieu to his generous friends; then quitting the mansion, he retired by dusk, through the gates of Edinburgh, and taking Horse, he arrived the following day at Berwick, where a vessel being ready to transport him to his native land, he immediately embarked, and the wind being propitious, he instantly set sail for Italia's shore.

CHAP. IV.

———What are the pray'rs of innocence?
Death heeds them not; but blind in his pursuit,
Tramples o'er mild commisseration's breast,
And sends th' exterminating arrow home,
Wreckless of future griefs and misery.

The bird in golden cage confin'd,
Still pants to perch on freedom's tree;
Who then can blame the human mind,
That risks its life, for liberty.

W. H. I.

TWO years elapsed and still no tidings of Alzarro arrived from Italy. Alexander, King of Scotland, was dead, and several claimants appeared alledging each of them a prior right of succession to the Scottish crown. After very high disputes, the business was referred to the arbitration of King Edward the First of England, who, anxious to annex all

Scotland to his own dominions, awarded the sovereignty to Baliol, (who was the great grandson of David Earl of Huntingdon, by his eldest daughter Margaret), because he proffered, to the ambitious Edward, the most disgraceful terms; for he received the Scottish Diadem upon conditions that he should owe fealty to the English Crown; by which ignominious act, John Baliol sold the legitimate rights of his countrymen. But Scotia's hardy Clans, unwilling to barter thus their liberty, made head against their Monarch, and their country thus became one dreadful scene of bloodshed and devastation.

Foremost of the party striving for the freedom of his native soil was seen the noble chief, Sir Alan Macdonald, as wise in council as he was dauntless in the hour of danger.

Sir Alan proved for a time a dreadful

scourge to English Edward, who, with a numerous and well disciplined army, had invaded Scotland, to maintain in his dependant though regal state, the person of John Baliol—But all Sir Alan's prowess could not turn aside the unerring shaft of death, and he expired in battle; bravely fighting in the cause of freedom and his native land.

The inveteracy which Sir Alan Macdonald had uniformly displayed against the arms of England, pointed him out as a fit object for the enemy's vengeance; and his castle, being shortly after beseiged, was razed to the ground by the troops of Edward; when every inmate, (save only the Lady Macdonald and Huberto, who were with infinite difficulty rescued by the captain of the band and sent prisoners to London), was inhumanly butchered by the soldiery with the most savage brutality; amongst whom it was believed, throughout Scot-

land, that the Lady Macdonald and Avinzo had also suffered.

It was when immured in the narrow confines of a lonely dungeon, that the innate virtue of Huberto became so eminently conspicuous; with each revolving year had the energies of his mind been gradually displayed, and at this eventful period the light of reason began to beam upon his active mind. Avinzo had already learnt from Lady Macdonald the mystery that enveloped his fate; which had been communicated to Sir Alan previous to the departure of the mysterious Alzarro; nor was he incapable of feeling acutely these emotions which would have arisen in the breast of one whom years had rendered more experienced.

But every selfish contemplation was cancelled from his soul at the very moment which widowed the Lady Mac-

donald, and placed her in the power of an insulting enemy; all that contempt his boyish bosom felt was boldly displayed whenever the taunting soldiery brutally derided a woman's grief. At such moments would Huberto turn and mingle tears of tenderness with her's; then would he kiss her hands, and rest his damp cold cheek upon her burning arm, galled by the encircling manacles rude pressure.—At eve, it was Avinzo's care to range the straw that formed her resting place: by night he would sing her into slumbers, and pray with fervour that all her visions might be dreams of peace;—then, stretching himself by her side upon the pavement, he would cast one agonizing thought upon Alzarro and own his lost parents, pray for their souls, and sleep till early dawning.

Month succeeded month, till the constitution of the suffering Lady Macdonald, unable longer to sustain the

accumulated ills that assailed her, fell an easy prey to the corroding power of internal fever, which visibly undermined the small portion of bodily strength she still continued to enjoy.

Finding that her weakness became daily more indicatory of approaching dissolution, she one evening, when Huberto was endeavouring as usual to allay her miseries, thus bespoke him:—

"My child, my Avinzo, for such I feel myself entitled to call thee, I am conscious that the period is very near at hand, which, by terminating my heavy calamities, will leave thee a friendless orphan, exposed to the rude buffets of the tempestuous sea of life! 'Tis this thought alone, my Huberto, which renders the approach of death appalling to me; 'tis only this contemplation that checks the smile of benignity which would otherwise gild the moment that

surrendered my spirit into the hands of my Creator.—Now listen, my Avinzo; the great career of life appears before you. I do not caution you from any apprehension of the instability of your virtue, but I tremble as I mentally gaze upon the machinations of those, whose purpose it is to sap the root of virtue in the unguarded and unsuspecting breast of inexperience. Beware, my Huberto! beware, my child! for *caution*, is, alas! the only bequest which Sir Alan's widow has to bestow."

At this period of her address, the Lady Macdonald paused; and drawing forth a tablet which she had ever kept concealed within her bosom, and with it a ring, wherein was set a precious jewel, round the rim of which appeared most curiously wrought, the armourial bearings, crest and motto of the ancient family of the Macdonalds; she first pressed to her lips this dear relic of her-

departed Lord, and then presenting it to Avinzo, commanded him to wear it when revolving years should stamp him man; after which opening her tablets, she thus continued:—

"The death of my husband, the brave Sir Alan, my dearest boy, has not, nor ever will I am sure, escape thy recollection. Thou art acquainted with the glorious cause in which he bled---the cause for which we suffer. Oh! my Huberto, if in thy breast should ripen that dear thirst of fame, which even now shines forth in thy yet boyish bosom, do not abandon my dear country's cause, but be the friend of Robert Bruce, our Scotland 'sdarling pride! and let thy sword be wielded in endeavouring to overthrow ambitious Edward's tyranny. Receive too, this tablet, my Avinzo, and when I am no more, let thy first step be, on the attainment of freedom, to fly this hateful soil and seek the land beloved, which gave me

birth, and first placed thee under my protection; there join the noble Robert Bruce, and all his brave adherents, amongst whom ranks foremost the youthful Lord Walter, who, if report speaks true, will be created by King Robert, the Lord High Steward of our land; into his hands deliver this same tablet, containing a concise narrative of every circumstance attending thy mysterious fate, and which concludes in a manner that will not, my Huberto, tend to thy disadvantage. Annexed to this account is also, under the hand and seal of Sir Alan Macdonald, the bequest to thee of all that land which he could freely dispose of, forming an estate of considerable value, if ever the affairs of Scotland are so arranged as to admit thy claim.---As to the recital of my woes, I leave the painful task to thee, Avinzo; my loved husband's fate they have, alas! long known and lamented. Tell the young Lord Walter, that my latest prayer was

offered up for him and thee; for that nobleman, my Huberto, is the offspring of a sister still dear to my recollection, though years are now elapsed since death relentless blasted all her radiant beauties, consigning her to an early grave."

During this long address, which greatly exhausted the feeble Lady Macdonald, Huberto's eyes remainded unceasingly rivetted on her face, from which the dew of tenderness fell copiously; his agonized bosom heaved with convulsive throbs, and, as if fearful of interrupting her discourse, he scarcely permitted the breath to escape his trembling lips.

As the last sound of the Lady Macdonald's voice died upon the ear of Avinzo, he caught her emaciated hand, and pressing it to his lips, would have breathed forth the sensations that wholly engrossed his grateful soul; but the fast flowing tears that streamed from his up-

raised eyes prevented him, and broken sobs were the only testimonies he displayed of those agonizing sensations, which had usurped unrivalled sway in his breast.

As the dusky hue of twilight, spread its obscuring veil around, the internal fever, which had till that moment augmented to such a degree as nearly to deprive the Lady Macdonald of reason, subsided almost instantaneously, and a chilly numbness succeeded; the certain indication of approaching death.

In vain were the fervent ejaculations of Avinzo, offered up to the Throne of Mercy; in vain did he supplicate the interference of the callous wretch, who kept strict watch without the dungeon door; the smallest emotion of pity, did not even actuate his hardned soul, for he continued his accustomed march to and

fro the dreary avenue, regardless alike, of sorrow, sickness and death.

In this torpid state, the Lady Macdonald continued until the near approach of midnight, when suddenly raising her form, she seized with an agonized grasp, the clasped hands of Avinzo, and pressing them to her chill bosom, exclaimed:

—" Father of Mercy, receive my soul, and guard with thy all fostering care, this child of innocence and virtue."

Her lips still moved, but utterance was gone; her eyes, which continued upraised, were now fixed in death; all pulsation was frozen, and her languid heart with difficulty beat one.—It was, indeed, the heavy signal, for at that instant life had fled its earthly tenement for ever.

Stretched on the ashy corse of the Lady Macdonald, Huberto remained,

wholly unconscious of every thing that passed around him, and the rays of morning which once more shot through the lofty grated chasm of the dungeon, still found him in this motionless condition, which might, indeed, be deemed a state of bliss, since every sublunary idea was then buried in oblivion.

On the entrance of the jailor with the scanty portion of food allotted the prisoners, the lifeless body of the Lady Macdonald was conveyed from the dungeon; and it was with the utmost difficulty that Huberto was restored to that state of recollection, which at once placed before his imagination the irreparable loss he had sustained, and the unprotected situation in which he then found himself.—He wept;—but the gentle dew of commiseration was unavailing; he wrung his hands, and loudly breathed forth his heart-felt agony, but no compassionating ear received the tale of woe;

he beat his tearful eyes around in search of that revered form, which still, in death, would have afforded some degree of comfort to his affliction, yet naught appeared but the cold and comfortless flinty walls of his desolate dungeon.

In this distressing state, did Avinzo remain during the whole of that day; when, worn at length with the excess of those agonies that oppressed his youthful mind, he stretched his weary frame upon the straw and sunk into a heavy sleep, which still presented to his entranced imagination the form of her, who, while awake, had occupied his every thought.

Huberto, during his sleep, imagined that the person of the Lady Macdonald stood before him, in appearance even more prepossessing than he ever remembered to have beheld it in happier times; with features arrayed with that sweet smile of content and beneficence which,

prior to the loss of Sir Alan Macdonald, they had ever been accustomed to display. After having regarded him awhile, Huberto thought that the form thus bespoke him.:—

"Remember, my dear boy, that heaven's decrees are immutable and just, and that death is inevitable; weep not, therefore, my Avinzo, for my loss, it was the will of the Omnipotent which snatched me from thee, and thou must yield, with due submission, to the behest of fate. Look, therefore, to thyself, my child, nor waste those precious hours in unavailing woe, which cannot be recalled, and which are due to God alone."

The form then waved, with graceful motion, its outstretched arm, when instantly the figure of Sir Allan seemed to stand beside that of the Lady Macdonald, gazing with tenderness on the form of Huberto.—At length the visions appear-

ed to dissolve into air, but Avinzo, still entranced in sleep, awoke not till the return of morning.

Huberto rose from his pallet, the foregoing dream still dwelling on his glowing imagination, when actuated by the wholesome lesson it afforded, he knelt down and offered up his grateful orison to the Throne of Mercy.

During the day he strove against the painful contemplations which very frequently obtruded themselves upon his mind, and though, in the first instance, his efforts were apparently ineffectual, perseverance at length wrought the desired effect, for, when the loss of his benign patroness and benefactor came to his recollection, the all-puissant will of fate opposed itself, and he instantly bowed with reverence to the decrees of heaven.

As the gloom gradually wore off from Huberto's mind, he imperceptibly began to recur to his own fate, when the first idea that flashed upon his intellect was the ardent desire of compassing his lost liberty. Actuated by this sentiment, every other contemplation appeared as insignificant, and vanished from his mind. It was then his youthful soul conjured up a thousand plans, which, however cautiously he proceeded in their execution, proved, in the end, equally abortive: at length chance, in some measure, accomplished the purpose which he had so long and ardently sought to attain.

It so happened, at this particular period, that a great influx of noble Scottish prisoners, taken by the victorious troops of King Edward the First, arrived in London; so that the dungeons of every prison were even more than filled by the unfortunate, yet steady, partizans of the

brave Wallace, then commander of a very powerful force in Scotland.

Ambrose de Landabar, the keeper of the goal that contained Huberto, having been frequently assured by the lady Macdonald, previous to her dissolution, that the young Avinzo was, by birth, a foreigner, and by no means interested in the internal broils of Scotland, (which it had always been supposed was the case, he having been taken prisoner with the Lady Macdonald, under a supposition that he was the legitimate son, and consequently heir to the estates and title of Sir Allan), of the truth of which communication of Lady Macdonald, the goaler, from many concurring events, was convinced, this added to the youthful age of Avinzo, and his very prepossessing appearance, at length prompted him to allow a certain portion of freedom to Huberto; who, on the arrival of these Scottish prisoners of note, was at once taken

under the immediate care of Ambrose de Landabar, and the dungeon wherein he had been confined was, in consequence, allotted to some miserable captives, whose rank, and sturdy opposition to the cause of England, demanded their close imprisonment.

Avinzo, ever anxious to visit that dear land which might almost be deemed his native soil; and burning, unceasingly, with the desire of avenging the cause of Scotland, and Sir Alan's misfortunes and death; endeavoured, by every means he could devise, to free himself from the detested confines of the prison; for, although at liberty to traverse all the dreary courts and avenues of the fortress, he was, nevertheless, debarred from all egress beyond the circuit of the tremendous walls which environed it. Conscious, therefore, that any open endeavour would be impracticable, Huberto, at length, had recourse to stratagem; a

measure repugnant to his soul, but which he conceived, to be justifiable under existing circumstances; and in consequence of this determination, by his unremitting assiduities, he strove to endear himself to Ambrose, the keeper of the fortress; but his endeavours, though attended with success, unfortunately rendered his bondage even more secure; for the jailor became so habituated to a mode of action, till then a stranger to his mind, that Avinzo was scarcely for a moment permitted to leave his presence; and even in those painful avocations, which his duty compelled him to fulfil, Huberto was made his constant companion.

Thus we find Avinzo, at his birth, an helpless orphan, transported from his parents and his native land; twice befriended, and then cruelly bereft of both his patrons; afterwards a prisoner, and witness of the miseries and death of her he reverenced as a mother; and last-

ly, the companion of a remorseless jailor. —Such were the extraordinary vicissitudes which had checquered the life of this youth, who, after three long year's continuance as the friend of the obdurate Ambrose de Landabar, had just attained the period of his sixteenth year.

Every bright ray of flattering hope that had gradually dawned upon the soul of Avinzo, as uniformly faded in his bosom, and seemed, at length, to be altogether extinguished;—his only occupation now was to commiserate, as much as possible, the sufferings of those, for whom, in secret, his overflowing heart shed the gentle drops of pity.

One night, previous to his retiring to rest, according to his wonted custom, he accompanied Ambrose de Landabar as he repaired to the dungeon of each unhappy prisoner; being armed, as was

usual. On passing the cell of one of these unfortunates, the agonized groans of its inhabitant, most peculiarly arrested the attention of Huberto, at whose ardent intercession the keeper paused, when the voice of the individual in confinement supplicated, in the most impressive tone, for a draught of water, to allay the parching heat, which the violence of internal fever had kindled through every vein.

Ambrose, unmoved, was on the point of advancing along the avenue, when Avinzo again intreated; and by his persuasion led the jailor to unbolt the dungeon door, when, on entering by the gleam of the dim lamp, burning on the opposite wall, a figure appeared stretched upon the pavement, and writhing in apparent agony.

Huberto, instantly seizing the arm of Ambrose de Landabar, begged his per-

mission to procure the beverage required by the unfortunate sufferer; with which request having complied with infinite reluctance, Avinzo, bearing the lamp, flew to the chamber which he occupied, adjoining to that of Ambrose, and having filled an horn, instantly returned to administer the desired relief; but, on Huberto's re-entrance into the dungeon, what was his surprise and horror, on beholding the figure of Ambrose de Landabar stretched lifeless on the pavement, and the late apparently dying prisoner fled.—On a further examination Avinzo found a reeking dirk beside the corse, and on raising the lamp, the grating of the casement which was not lofty, had been broken down, through which it appeared evident that the prisoner had effected his escape.

Huberto now surmised that the groans of the prisoner had been merely a pretence, and the request for beverage was

only made in the hope that one of the persons visiting the cell might be dispatched to procure it, and that during his absence, by attacking the single remaining keeper unawares, he might effect his purpose, which would probably have been impracticable opposed to the combined force of two armed individuals.

But this was not the only thought which now obtruded itself on Huberto's mind; another idea operated still more forcibly on his brain, arising from a full conviction that the murder of Ambrose would be attributed to himself; to remain, therefore, in the prison, under such a supposition, would have been madness, added to which, the hope of freedom, like a resplendant ray, once more shed its bright influence over his soul, and Huberto, without hesitation, following the course of fugitive, soon found himself on the brink of the casement; for a moment he paused, as the darkness of the night,

by obscuring every object, prevented perceiving the heighth from whence had to spring;—dauntless at length raised his eyes to heaven, and offe up one fervent ejaculation, sprung fe giving himself at once into the hand fate.

CHAP. V.

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags?
What is't you do?
A deed without a name.

SHAKESPEARE.

STUNNED by the fall, it was some minutes ere Huberto recovered his scattered senses; at length however, he arose, free from any material injury, but greatly weakened, owing to the force of the shock he had sustained. Immediate flight became absolutely necessary; yet, how should he escape from London, surrounded as it was with walls and watch-turrets; and the gates of which were closely barred by night, as well upon its inhabitants, as against the stranger who claimed admittance.

Avinzo, yielding to these appalling ideas, which had not before obtruded themselves upon his mind, continued advancing for a length of time, equally unconscious of the course he should adopt, as he was an utter stranger to the tract he was then pursuing.

While occupied in this contemplation, he placed his hand to his forehead, when the pressure of the ring, given to him by the Lady Macdonald, brought, instantaneously, to his remembrance, the tablet which he had ever since concealed within his bosom; and for which he immediately sought, but in vain.

Agonized at the loss he had sustained, and wholly unmindful of every danger that was likely to accrue, Avinzo immediately began to re-trace his steps with the utmost caution; and, after some difficulty, found himself at the base of the turret from whence he had effected his escape. All around was buried in

solemn silence; and, by the dim gleam, still issuing through the open casement, it appeared most probable that the alarm had not yet been given, as the under-keepers of the fortress had not gone their usual midnight round, nor discovered the murdered body of Ambrose de Landabar.

Huberto sought the tablet for a considerable time, but in vain; when, almost despairing of success, he, at length, descried it; and, seizing with rapture the much desired relic, he pressed it, with transport, to his lips. Just at that critical moment, a strong blaze of light issued from the casement of the tower, and the confused sound of voices, in a few seconds, gave the alarm. Shortly after, the prison bell began to toll, when every guard and inmate of the fortress was instantly in motion.

At this trying juncture Huberto's

first thought was immediate flight; but a momentary consideration fully convinced him, that a place of concealment near the prison, would much less subject him to a discovery, as the search would, in all probability, be carried to some distance from the walls.

Under this assurance, Avinzo stole from the spot he then occupied, with the utmost precipitancy; and after the most minute search, was, at length, fortunate enough to discover a small cavity, worn by time, at the base of a projecting buttress of the prison wall. It was with considerable difficulty that Huberto forced his way into this opening, which he, however, effected; when, almost instantaneously, several parties of the soldiery, issuing from the fortress, appeared in sight, branching off in every direction to pursue the fugitive whose hand had levelled to the earth the person of the keeper, Ambrose de Landabar.

In this horrible state of suspense, Avinzo continued, till the sombre robe of night imperceptibly assumed a greyish tint, and soon the eastern horizon, crowned with Aurora's radiating front, proclaimed the cheerful return of jocund day. Avinzo, gazing on the welcome light, forgot, in a great measure, the perilous situation in which he was then placed; nor was he roused from contemplating the blazing chariot of the day, till the guards, returning to the fortress, caught his attention; and as they passed near the place of his concealment, enabled him to distinctly trace the person of the delinquent fugitive, whom they had secured, and were then conducting back in chains, in order that he might shortly suffer the punishment that awaited him, for the murder of his jailor, and the daring escape which he had effected.

As morning advanced Huberto conceived it most expedient to quit the spot

which had afforded him a safe asylum, and endeavour, if possible, to escape the precincts of the city:—having first bent around a look of the most scrutinizing enquiry, and not perceiving any individual near, Avinzo ventured forth, and with hasty stride bent his course towards the northern gate. In his way he overtook many workmen, some bearing on their shoulders the implements of their trade, while others were loaded with heavy planks of massy oak.

Avinzo enquired of one of these labouring men, whose age almost incapacitated him from supporting the heavy burthen on his shoulders, whither they were then going? Upon which interrogatory, the old labouring man informed him, that they, with numerous other workmen, were employed in repairing some outworks of the city, adjoining to the northern postern, which, through age, were in a very mouldering condition.

Touched with the appearance of this venerable old man, whose hairs and bushy beard were silvered over by the hand of time, Huberto insisted on easing him of a portion of the load he carried; with which desire, the other having reluctantly complied, Avinzo, with this party of labouring men, arrived in safety at the northern extremity of the city of London, where, at the postern, was ranged a guard, which, on their approach, unbarred the gate, and, greeting them in the harsh language of the common herd, gave them free egress from the city; and thus Huberto providentially found himself at liberty; for had he not escaped by this lucky chance he could not otherwise have effected it, as orders had been issued, the preceding evening, that no individual should pass the walls of London, without a prior examination by the captain of the guard, as the immense concourse of Scottish prisoners, then captive in the city, ren-

dered such a precaution absolutely necessary.

Thus what had been solely offered by Huberto, at the instigation of charity, became, unintentionally, the happy source of his deliverance; for stratagem would never have effected that which chance had thus fortunately placed in his power.

Having accompanied the labourers to the spot, where they were then employed, Avinzo quitted them, after first receiving the hearty thanks of the old man, and the praises of his fellow workmen, who, void of all suspicion, suffered Huberto to depart.

Avinzo finding himself thus freed from all apprehension, as to the search which would, in all probability, be set on foot throughout the interior part of the city, instantly determined on continuing his

course with the utmost expedition, keeping himself as much as possible from the eye of observation; he, therefore, immediately set forward with the greatest celerity, nor even once made a halt, though assailed by the keen pressure of hunger, till the ruddy streaks, crowning the western horizon, proclaimed the setting of day.

Huberto having gained a lowly peasant's hut, on the skirts of a lofty wood, tapped at the door for admittance, when the hostess of the humble cottage appeared, of whom Avinzo had no sooner claimed a crust of bread and a draught of water; than with all the frankness of uncontaminated simplicity, the homely fare of the cottage was instantly placed upon the board before him.

Huberto, while partaking of the food, showered down blessings on his kind hostess, who, together with a sprightly

boy, seemed internally to experience that satisfaction which arises from a conviction of acting towards others as we would have them do in regard to ourselves.

Scarcely had Avinzo concluded the repast, which was rendered exquisite by the hunger which had impelled it, when a ruddy peasant youth entered the hovel followed by an elderly labourer, both of them bending beneath the load they supported on their lusty shoulders.—These, Huberto was soon given to understand, were the husband and eldest son of his hostess, who were no sooner eased of their loads, than both, with rustic simplicity, and a cordial shake of the hand, welcomed their guest.

After some conversation, from the tenor of which Avinzo was under the necessity of informing them that he had journeyed that very day from London, and

was then steering to join the forces of King Edward, on the Scottish borders; the old man first extolled the celerity with which Avinzo had proceeded, and then gave him to understand that he was now more than forty miles from the capital; after which the peasant intreated him to repose in their cottage for that night; which invitation Huberto having gratefully accepted, his host soon began to lavish praises on the noble feats of arms atchieved by his dauntless Monarch, Edward; and concluded with a hearty prayer that he might tame the pride of the rebellious Scotchmen, as he termed them.

Although such sentiments but ill accorded with those that actuated the soul of Avinzo, he was, notwithstanding, compelled to yield a tacit compliance to every thing advanced by his host, whom he perceived to be one of those characters that would have proved equally inimical to him as he then was friendly,

had he but known the real sentiments of Huberto's mind.

As the last misty hue of twilight still spread its grey mantle over every sublunary object this cottage family retired to rest, Huberto reposing with the peasant's son, who, in the course of the evening's conversation, had frequently expressed a desire of wielding a sword in his country's cause, would his fond mother but give her consent. During the night Avinzo enjoyed an uninterrupted sleep; no dream, fraught with horror, arose to harrass his soul; and when the shrill-gorged cock first tuned his matin note he quitted the rug, and, having partook of the morning's repast, bid his kind friends farewell; who, having directed him in the track he should pursue, sent forth a thousand fervent wishes for his success in arms; after which Huberto once more set out upon his adventurous journey.

For six successive days Avinzo continued on his march, during which period he was twice benighted, and compelled to seek repose beneath the shade of some friendly tree, which canopied his weary head; and towards the close of the seventh evening, having passed the river Tees, beyond Richmond, in Yorkshire, he soon found himself advancing into the mazes of a dreary forest, that skirted on every side the margin of the translucent stream.

Huberto having bent around a look of enquiry, sought, but in vain, for some friendly habitation that might screen him from approaching night, which seemed likely, from the unfavourable appearance of the surrounding atmosphere, to prove very tempestuous:—dark sheets of clouds rolling onward from the south, soon obscured the radiance of evening, and bespoke all the horrors of a tremendous storm.

As Huberto advanced, the last tinge of light faded to the eye, the dark ethereous blue of tranquil night was compleatly overcast, the glittering forms of the stars were obscured, and no friendly moon darted its watery beams on the bosom of nature; the tempestuous wind soon arose, and forcibly agitated the lofty trees, whistling bleakly through the branches that spread around their umbrageous foliage.

Avinzo still advanced, determined to brave the pitiless storm, and should any habitation present itself, request a shelter from the night's inclemency. As he proceeded onwards the wind grew still more boisterous, the rain began to fall, and from afar the rattling thunder spoke to Huberto's ear, in the most tremendous peals; still no friendly hovel met his regard; and, in this situation he found himself, having advanced into the most gloomy recesses of the forest, where

the faintest light alone was visible; when at intervals the tremulous flash of the vivid lightning shot through the dark, still augmenting by its momentary glare, the horrors of every surrounding object.

Avinzo torn by the brambles and wearied by the wet lank grass, that continually twined about his ancles, impeding his progress, reclined his weary frame against the huge trunk of a lofty and venerable oak, which seemed for a century to have defied the rude assaults of all the conflicting elements.

Huberto had not long assumed this station, when a rustling sound suddenly caught his attention; which as he listened, evidently approached towards him, and in a few seconds something halted close beside him.

Avinzo, reclining a little, stretched forth his hand, when to his great sur-

prise, he felt a poor half starved dog trembling with cold, and crouching at his feet. After caressing awhile the poor animal, whose bones appeared almost starting from its skin, the dog sprang forward in the action of delight, and wagging its tail, seemed almost, by dumb eloquence, to court Huberto to follow him; whose first conjecture had been, on beholding the creature, that some habitation must of course be near to which the animal belonged.

Swayed by this supposition, Avinzo quitted his resting place, while the dog barking, seemed to express pleasure at every advance he made.

Still following his conductor, Huberto traversed through thickets, almost impenetrable; when suddenly arriving on a broad expanse of plain, he descried at no very great distance the dismantled turrets, of what appeared to have been once a fortified castle of vast extent;

thither the animal instantly directed its course, sometimes bounding forwards, and at others, stretching its lanky form upon the grass awaiting his approach.

In this manner, Avinzo gained at length the dilapidated entrance of the castle, and passing through the court yard, hall, and other mouldering chambers, the dog at length made a halt at the commencement of a flight of stone steps, which to all appearance communicated with the dungeons beneath this desolate building.

Here Huberto paused full of thought, and for a few seconds yielded to the assailing impulse of fear; but conscious integrity re-animating his noble breast, he boldly proceeded onward to the flight of steps, on which was seated the dog, his watchful conductor.

As Avinzo proceeded, the staircase seemed to wind beneath the pavement of

the chambers he had so lately traversed in a gradual descent. All was in an instant obscured in the darkness of the grave; a damp chill struck on every side, and the humidity rendered it difficult to descend the mouldering steps: At length, however, Huberto found himself at the bottom of the staircase; when the dog continuing to advance, led him through several avenues and vaulted dungeons, all buried alike in the same appalling darkness.

Once more the youth made a halt, not that the impulse of terror unmaned his soul in the present instance; for on the contrary, it was the sober suggestion of *reason*, which instigated him in the adoption of such conduct.

"In what," said he mentally, "will this strange event terminate; by the appearance of every thing around me, no human being can possibly be the vo-

luntary inhabitant of these lonely caverns; the very damps are petrifying to my frame, the air is stagnate and unwholesome, and the darkness is that of a second chaos. Creatures of good, delight not in such horrors; nor would the murderous ruffian ever select a spot for his asylum so truly horrible as the present; yet whence the meagre hound that still is my conductor? some human being must surely sojourn here; and should plunder be his trade my poverty will doubtless seal my doom."

Huberto for some moments stood irresolute, doubtful whether to advance, or seek for safety in immediate flight; but a little consideration convinced him of the fruitlessness of the attempt; for thought he, mentally, "if plunder be the intent, my weary limbs will never bear me from the close pursuit of disappointed ruffians, and then the wish to escape consigns me to immediate death."

—" No," continued Avinzo, aloud;—" Fate marshals me into the lists, and I must follow its behest; into the hands of Omnipotence, therefore, I willingly resign my cause; God never forsakes the true dependent on his Justice and Mercy."

Having concluded this ejaculation, Avinzo moved forward with dauntless step and heroic mind, the animal still leading onward, when after passing other vaults, he suddenly entered one more lofty and spacious than any he had before traversed, where by the sickly glimmer of a blue flame, two forms appeared in the distance, towards whom the dog immediately proceeded, sending forth a loud yell, that shrilly echoed through the various subterraneous passages.

As Huberto approached the extraordinary forms before him, a chilling horror numbed his frame, he felt the warm

blood fly with precipitancy to his heart, and every joint became palsied with assailing terrors; for on advancing within a few paces, two hags appeared before him, more loathsome and ugly than imagination ever pictured to the mind, each with glaring and sunken eyes bent upon his person.

Twined within the hair of each, which was lank, coarse, and of a raven black, was the shrivelled carcase of a poisonous adder; their visages were long, thin, loathsome and cadaverous, from each of which protruded a nose, skinny and pointed at the extremity; their mouths from which projected sharp teeth, were hideously wide; their lips were thin and black, while the grizzly hairs that grew around, produced the appearance of a masculine beard. Their breasts were totally bared and of a tawney hue, being but a loose shrivelled covering to their projecting bones. Their arms were

uncovered, and their fingers peculiarly long, each nail of which was black and pointed like an eagle's talon. Around the loins of each was a filthy jagged covering, leaving from the knees downward, quite bare: their legs were but crooked bones, thinly covered, and their feet grimed and skinny. In the hand of the one was the branch of an yew, the other grasped a deadly cypress bough; the seat of each hag, was a mound of dead men's bones.

Between the persons of these appalling objects rose a pyramid of grinning sculls, on the summit of which was placed a brazen cauldron, from whence issued a blue lambent flame, which, casting a sickly gleam in every direction, added still more to the surrounding horrors; while the pavement was strewed with the reeking carcases and limbs of newly mangled reptiles, and others nailed

against the walls, were in a state of putrefaction, exhaling the most nauseous stench.

Huberto, as if spell-bound, remained gazing on this horrible spectacle; for although he was desirous of averting his regard, still his eyes were immutably fixed upon the dreadful scene before him. At length one of the hags turning her regard from Avinzo, and fixing her eyes upon the opposite form, exclaimed—

"Sister, what should all this be,
'Longs he unto thee or me?"

To which interrogatory the other form replied—

"Sister, in whatever state,
He's the child of mystic fate;
Still oppress'd with galling wrongs,
Nor to thee nor me belongs;
Some that smile the chance shall rue,—
Sister, then a deed he'll do!"

After which the first hag continued

"The rudder's lost,
The vessel's tost,
Upon the raging main;
Night's dark and drear,
No pilot near;—
Rude blasts and chilling rain."

The second figure then replied,—

"Parents lost and land ne'er known,
Friends whom worms have left alone,
Murder stalks, the dying groan,
Blood drops sweat from yonder stone,
I see, I see, I see."

When the first hag continued th her mystic words;—

"Now on a sun-beam rides renown,
Now I behold dame Fortune frown,
Rudest blasts assail the crown.
The course is run,
All seems undone;
Yet mark the cauldron's ruddy hue,
Still act on act is left to do."

Upon which the second form hastily replied—

"Aye, now the work is cross'd,
And murder nipt i'the frost;
The owls and ravens cease,
All nature seems at peace."

"Mum," quoth the first hag, angrily, "Hecate looks grimly, therefore sister

"Hold—nor further now explore,
Mortal ears must hear no more."

Every syllable of those mystic lines were firmly impressed upon the attentive ear of the astonished Avinzo, who, after continuing to regard these loathsome hags, for some moments assumed at length a degree of fortitude, which had been hitherto apparently banished from his breast; and, still advancing forward some paces, he thus bespoke them:—

"Appalled I stand, nor know I whether to address ye as creatures of this

earth, or beings of another region; still will I dare question ye, since something of the past and future seems committed to your keeping; not that I desire a knowledge beyond the period past: I only seek to know the mysterious fate of those who gave me being; the fate of him who bore me from my native soil, and left me in a foreign land with full assurance of return, but hath not since been heard of.---If by this interrogatory I am free from sin, then, I conjure ye, speak; if not, keep, I charge ye, the mystery from mine ear, for the immutable decrees of Heaven must be obeyed."

To whom the first sister thus replied;—

"Would'st thou nourish that within thy breast, which would not fail to torture thee with scorpion stings?"

"No sting could inflict on me such

galling pangs as dread uncertainty," answered Huberto with firmness; "therefore, if ye may, solve me at once the doubt that weighs upon my harrassed soul;—live yet the authors of my wretched life? and lives Alzarro, guardian of my infant age?—Speak, I implore ye."

"It may not be," answered the second hag, with a slow shake of the head.

"Then wherefore was I hither brought," continued Avinzo, "to be the witness of this terrific scene? Why speak of me with such mysterious emphasis? Why torture thus a helpless creature, augmenting still more the burthen of wretchedness that almost bends the wandering sufferer to the earth?—In mercy answer me this!"

"We must not satisfy your doubtings," exclaimed both the sisters.

"Stand I then the object of your
rision?" resumed Avinzo.

"Not so," was the immediate reply

"Then wherefore was I so strang
conducted into your presence?"

"To be the object of our wonder a
secret contemplations;" resumed
second sister.

"What is there in a fugitive like
that should excite surprise in creatu
who seem to contemplate the mazes
futurity, and to be gifted with m
than mortal skill?—Satisfy me on t
ground," said Avinzo, with firmness.

"Mystery, strange mystery;" answ
ed both the hags.

"In what does it consist?" resu
Huberto.

"In lineaments that indicate portenteous things, and manifest, at once, that hidden destiny extends its arm, befriending you by its mighty power, from the unsearchable behests of adverse fortune."

"Can ye satisfy my doubtings?" was still Avinzo's interrogatory.

"We can, but we are forbidden; an higher power controuls our speech, therefore ask not why or wherefore."

"Would ye aught more with me?" continued Huberto.

"Be silent," was the reply.

The two hags then arose from their horrid seats, and, after looking with a searching glance into the cauldron, muttered awhile some mystic words; after which they slowly advanced towards

Avinzo, who shrunk enhorrored at their approach. Having placed themselves on the right and left side of Huberto, each of the forms raising its hand took a small ringlet of his flowing hair; from which, (still muttering inexplicable words) having each separated seven hairs, the sisters plucked them from his head; and, after forming a circle round him with their crutches, they again advanced to the cauldron, wherein they cast these small portions of Avinzo's hair, when immediately the flame subsided; a loud yell was instantaneously heard, and Huberto found himself surrounded by the darkness of the grave.

After continuing for some minutes lost in amazement, Avinzo began to think of retracing his way to the staircase, when the recollection of the little dog, his former conductor, obtruded itself upon his mind, and he listened with the utmost attention in the

fond hope of catching the sound of the animal's approach, but all was silent as the drear sepulchre of death; when Huberto, turning in that direction by which he had entered the vault, began slowly to retrace his way, and at length, with some difficulty, found himself at the bottom of the flight of stone steps; having ascended these, he soon regained the upper chambers, which having traversed, he arrived in safety at the mouldering arched-way of this decayed structure, beneath the vaulted roofing of which, Avinzo having seated himself on a loose fragment of the building, gave way to that train of mental contemplations which would naturally arise in the sensative soul, after witnessing the late extraordinary scene so well calculated to work upon the imagination, and lead the mind into a labyrinth of conjectures, as inexplicable in themselves as the objects were terrific who had given rise to them.

CHAP. VI.

Our fare is scant, but hospitality
Reigns sov'reign of our feats. And though we lack
The bodies dainty food, we still have store
To fit the soul for that long journey hence,
Which all must take on this side of the grave.

THE rude winds no longer waved in fury the foliage of the surrounding forest; the awful thunder no more resounded through the regions of air, nor did the blaze of forked lightnings mark their fiery track upon the ebon mantle of night, the pattering rain had altogether subsided, and sober Melancholy held her pensive sway, the watry moon just darting forth its partial lustre upon the silent scene around.

Huberto, thoughtfully reclining his cheek upon his hand, beheld, with a min-

gled emotion of sadness and delight, this tranquil sleep of nature, which so finely contrasted itself with the raging fury of the elements that had marked the close of evening, as well as the late terrific scene which he had witnessed.

The present objects gradually communicated their effects to the mind of Huberto; for, as it is with the tempests of the atmosphere, even so it is with the human passions in the bosom of the virtuous; which, raging for an instant, spend themselves imperceptibly, and are then succeeded by the most perfect calm.

The soul, unshackled by the trammels of corrosive vice, is left at liberty to roam even amid those realms where the Great Father of beneficence dwells, beyond the weak ken of human sight.—It is at such moments that the spotless bosom glories in its own independence; for, that individual must, indeed, expe-

rience the vilest bondage, whose unvarying rule has been the constant commission of acts repugnant to the conscience.

At the present juncture the rapt soul of Avinzo winged its way to heavenly regions; for, never debased by vice, his unpolluted soul experienced no check, and his unfettered contemplations, therefore, tended only to impress his mind with love and veneration towards that Being, who, seated on the throne of justice and everlasting peace, watched the acceptable workings of his breast.

"Father of the universe!" exclaimed the entranced Avinzo, at the same time bending his knee to the earth, "my awe-struck soul owns thee for its omniscient guardian, and swells with warmest gratitude for thy beneficent protection.—How shall I find language to give vent to the

effusions of my heart, to speak the rapture now kindling in my breast.—Words are inefficient to the purposed prayer; my lips but half explain the thoughts that actuate my mind, which owes its being even to Omnipotence; for what is the soul but a glorious emanation of the Divinity? it is the immutable stamp set upon man, and seals him the beloved of heaven. For this most precious gift what is the remuneration required, but virtue from those possessing it, and virtue must itself ensure eternal felicity."

"What an idea of boundless mercy does not this contemplation produce," continued Huberto; "what an incitement is it to the frequent adoration it so justly claims of him who so beneficently diffuses it to all.—Did man but dwell upon this extatic thought, sin would sure grow out of date, and the whole world enjoy a blessed tranquillity; then would the murderer pour healing balm into the

wound his knife had made; then would compunction unnerve the dark machinations of revenge; hatred would yield to universal philanthropy, and man would live but for his brother man."

Vice is destructive in a three-fold degree; it destroys felicity here, contaminates the mind, by whose operation happiness might have been ensured, and places us in the most perilous situation when we contemplate the mazes of futurity. May such never prove my lot on casting the eye of retrospection on past events; but may I await the hour of dissolution, devoid of every dread, save only that sentiment of reverential awe which should always animate the soul, when occupied in the contemplation of rushing into the presence of him who is the source of justice and immutable truth.

Huberto continued to indulge in this

mental train of ideas till every thought of the past was buried in oblivion, and naught but pure devotion animated his breast. At length sweet sleep diffused its benign influence over his harrassed senses; when, folding himself in the loose mantle suspended from his shoulders, he found upon his flinty couch that sweet repose which vice and pampered luxury seeks for but in vain, under the rich canopy, on the luxurious bed of down.

As Huberto awoke, the ruddy hue of morning tinged the wide expanse of the eastern horizon; and every harmless songster, from his mossy bed, gave welcome, with swelling note, to the refulgent beams of day.

Avinzo quitting the place of his repose, cheerfully bent his steps from the castle's mouldering walls, and soon entering again the confines of the wood, found himself proceeding through its embowering mazes.

After having tarversed a considerable track of land, his gaze was at length attracted by the appearance of several foresters, who were occupied in felling to earth some venerable trees of the forest.

Huberto advancing towards them, first made enquiry as to the course he was then pursuing, of which he was wholly ignorant, when he found by their answers that he had journeyed in a direct course towards Aldstone, and was then about seventy miles from the banks of the river Tweed. Having further requested to know whether any habitation was near, he was answered in the negative, as the village to which these peasants belonged was upwards of four miles distant, and in a course diametrically opposite to that which it was requisite Avinio should pursue. These labouring men, however, proffered him a part of the coarse fare which they had

brought with them to the forest that morning, whereof Huberto gratefully partook, and then returning them his unfeigned thanks, he once more commenced his journey.

Avinzo for some time continued his march through the wood, which at length terminated, when he found himself verging on a wide expanse of Champaign country.

In the distance to the right arose the misty spires of Durham cathedral, tinged by the effulgent beam of day; to the left were seen the moated walls of a Baronial castle, skirted in the back ground by the sombre foliage of the forest whence Avinzo had just issued; and in the front the expansive scene was variegated with hamlets and straggling villages, while at some distance was perceptible the fretted spires of a monastic pile, whither Huberto had been directed by the

foresters to direct his course on quitting the wood.

Avinzo proceeded onward with the utmost celerity, and, at the close of day, made a halt before the portal of the sanctified mansion, which was inhabited by several brothers of the order of Holy Cross. At this place, Huberto having gained admission, was cordially welcomed by the reverend community, and by the charitable rules of their order, found at night the wished-for rug, whereon he gladly stretched his exhausted frame. By the information of the brotherhood he understood, that he had traversed nearly forty tedious miles, since the dawn, without any other sustenance than that which he had received from the labourers in the forest.

On the ensuing morning, Huberto rising from his pallet, repaired to the chapel to witness the celebration of mass; after which the fathers led him to the refec-

tory, where he partook, with them, of a plenteous repast; in the course of which, he requested to know the present situation of Edward's forces, which they informed him were spread in every direction on the borders of Scotland, but more particularly on the line communicating with the county of Northumberland; as the main body of the army was then in the vicinity of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

This knowledge instantly determined Huberto on proceeding to the border that joined the county of Cumberland; as he might be the better able to penetrate into Scotland by that route, and thereby escape the observation of the English forces.

Avinzo having been loaded by the good fraternity with provisions to keep him on his route, as they imagined that he was journeying to the army of Edward, and having also received the

benison of the superior of the monastery, he took his departure as if directly for Berwick-upon-Tweed, according to the instructions given him by the fathers; but, shortly after quitting the convent gate Avinzo turned again to the left, striking off in the direction of Longtown, which adjoins the extremity of the county of Cumberland, and communicates with Scotia's wished-for land.

During the day Huberto continued his journey onwards, without the least interruption; and, as the twilight once more shrouded evening's ruddy horizon, he distinctly heard, in the distance, the sound of martial music, sometimes bursting full upon the ear, and at others dying away in softest cadence, when the strain harmoniously floated on the still breezes of returning night.

Avinzo now paused, as it was obvious, from this circumstance, that he was

at no great distance from the English troops, who were then setting the evening watch previous to their encampments for the night.

The utmost caution now became absolutely expedient on Avinzo's part, and he wavered for a length of time, not knowing whether to venture on, aided by the darkness of the midnight hour, or remain concealed till the return of morning, and thence endeavour to effect a passage under an assumed frankness of manners, without having any apparent design in thus traversing the borders. Yet, to pass altogether unobserved, in the day time, would be, he was fully assured, utterly impossible; and if then taken what plausible story could be framed to prevent his immediate imprisonment, or else being compelled to serve under English Edward, against the cause of Scotland. On the other hand night did not only cloak him from immediate observation,

but, the watch being then few in number, and placed at stated distances from each other, undoubtedly afforded him a better opportunity of compassing his design.

Swayed by this reasonable suggestion, Avinzo made towards an adjoining thicket, under whose obscuring boughs he anxiously awaited the dreary hour of midnight.

CHAP. VII.

——————————And hark!
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch;
Steed threatens steed in high and boastful neighings,
Piercing the night's dull ear. Hark! from the tents,
The armourers accomplishing the Knights,
With clink of hammers, closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.

SHAKESPEARE.

DURING Huberto's continuance in the sequestered asylum he had chosen, his contemplative mind retraced, with astonishment, the wonderful vicissitudes of his eventful life. Every incident had been strongly characterized by the wonder-working hand of fate; they were not to be ranked among the number of those common events which are the attendants of the generality of mankind;

on the contrary, every page was stamped with something strikingly energetic, that seemed at once to single him out as the child of strange vicissitude.

Avinzo having refreshed himself with the remaining food and beverage, which had been given him on quitting the convent, he disencumbered himself of the gourd and the leathern pouch that had contained them; after which, concealing the ring and tablets (the last mournful bequest of the Lady Macdonald) within his girdle, he braced it tightly round his loins, and, armed only with a sturdy oaken stick, which he had gathered at the commencement of his journey, quitted the place of concealment, and boldly bent his march towards the borders.

The night, though perfectly serene, was almost obscured in darkness, which

seemed to favour, in a great measure, the operations of the fugitive; who, after advancing some time, was enabled to discern, immediately in front of him, the numerous tents of the English soldiery. Turning towards the left he continued in their rear for a considerable time, when they became gradually more scattered over the plain, and were obviously detached from each other.

Huberto halted, and, for a moment, his ears caught a distant sound, proceeding from the encampment: he listened—It was the watch word given by the officer on posting every hardy soldier; but soon again the silence reigned, when Avinzo ventured forward, and, passing on, escaped the line occupied by the encampment, without being observed or receiving the smallest interruption in his progress. Already did he conceive himself free from apprehension; already

his heart beat with pleasurable emotion at the fond idea of treading Scotia's long wished-for soil; when, on a sudden, a shrill cry broke on the reigning stillness of the night, and, in a few seconds, a numerous band of soldiery poured in from every quarter; the clangor of the trumpet resounded upon the stilly breeze, and immediately Huberto found himself a captive; fully conscious of his inability to withstand a force so disproportionate, he readily surrendered himself into the hand of the surrounding English, a detachment of whom immediately escorted him from the spot, and conducting him back by the same route he had come, they struck into the thickest part of the camp, where they detained him for some minutes at the entrance of a sumptuous tent, and then led him before the commander, whose duty it was that night to head the watch-guard in that quarter of the camp.

As Huberto approached, his mind assumed a greater degree of fortitude, and, on beholding his judge, he could not repel the pleasing emotion which involuntarily assailed him; for, on examining his features, from the appearance of which he scarcely seemed to have attained his one and twentieth year, not only manly beauty, but candour, gentleness, and philanthropy were happily conjoined.

This youthful officer, whose habiliaments bespoke him to be some gentleman of note, having observed Huberto, for some time, with infinite complacency, at length addressed him to the following effect, in the most gentle accents:—

"Speak, stranger, who and what art thou?"

"My name is Huberto Avinzo, and

my estate in life is that of a forlorn and dejected wanderer," was the reply.

"From your name it should appear that you are no native of these isles?" resumed the interrogator.

"Sir 'twas in Italia," answered Avinzo, "that I first drew my vital breath."

"What chance first led you to the English camp?" resumed the officer.

"I sought to pass the borders, and gain, in safety, the territory of Scotland," answered Avinzo.

"If thou art a forlorn wanderer," said the officer, "how will Scotia prove more grateful to thee than the land thou journeyest from?"

"There are ties," replied Avinzo, "which rivet our ideas even to things

inanimate: it was Scotland which first received my infant form, when a forlorn outcast from my native home. I cannot, therefore, do other than reverence the land that fostered me."

"Who were thy parents?" said the questioner.

"I know them not," resumed Huberto, with a sigh; after which he proceeded to give, in a concise manner, the mysterious relation of his being brought to Scotland, and Alzarro's departure from thence, while he was still an infant; he also explained the generous guardianship of Sir Alan Macdonald, and proceeded to relate the death of that stout Scottish gentleman, and the Lady Macdonald, to which he attributed all the misfortunes his youth had since experienced; and then, without giving a detail of his escape from London, he concluded by stating, that he had recommendations to

the young Lord Walter, and the Laird Douglas, by which he might be enabled to visit, once again, his native shore, could he but pass in safety the Scottish borders."

On mentioning the name of Laird Douglas, the strongest emotions were perceptible in the young officer's features, and he continued so absorbed in thought that it was some moments ere he made the least reply to Huberto's confession; at length, bending his gaze upon Avinzo, he bespoke him to the following effect:—

"Young stranger, your air, your manner, and your words bear so much the characteristic stamp of integrity that I cannot for a moment, resist their persuasive energy. Therefore, know young man, that I accord you a free pass to the land of England's most inveterate foes, for never shall it be said, that a Briton can wage war against the unfortunate and

defenceless wanderer." The officer then rising from his seat drew forth some marks of gold from beneath his robe, which were by his order, instantly presented to Huberto; and having also armed him with a trusty sword, he gave orders for his immediate conduct through the English camp.

Fain would Avinzo have warmly testified the gratitude that swayed his soul upon this occasion, but the young officer perceiving his intention smiled on him with the utmost complacency, and by an inclination of the head waved him to retire; upon which Huberto was instantly conducted, by the guards, from his presence.

As Avinzo proceeded on his way to the Scottish borders, he put some trivial questions to his conductors, and, among the rest, demanded the name of the young officer who had so signally be-

friended him; when after hearing the warmest panegyrics bestowed upon him by the guards, both for his valour, generosity and goodness of heart, Huberto learned that his name was Edwin, and that he was the only son of the noble Earl of Hereford; to this account was also added the assurance, that so strict were the orders of King Edward, relative to strangers passing through the English camp, that had not good fortune befriended him, he must have been made a close prisoner; as any other officer but Edwin would have ordered him into confinement, without even allowing him to make known the cause of his journeying thither.

The guards having conducted Huberto for some time through the encampments, at length acquainted him that he was then advancing on Scottish ground, and was at liberty to proceed forward in any direction; after which the soldiery bad

him farewell, wishing him a happy termination to his journey.

No sooner had Avinzo's conductors retired, than he enthusiastically prostrated himself on the earth, and pressing with his lips the soil he had so long and ardently desired to see, he breathed forth that prayer of gratitude to Omnipotence for his preservation, which ever swells the enraptured bosom of piety and virtue. Having concluded this spontaneous effusion of his soul, he arose wholly unmindful of the constant fatigue, both mental and bodily, which he had for some days undergone; and as the prisoner when freed from the dungeon's gloom, thinks not that his safety is assured till far removed from those detested walls, which so late entombed him; even so it was with Huberto, who having long pictured the attainment of happiness in Scotland only, fled with precipitancy, the confines of that terri-

tory, which had been to him, for so many tedious years, a hateful scene of bondage and unremitting sorrow.

The soul oppressed with many poignant griefs is far more galling to the sufferer, than the ponderous load heaped on the robust shoulders of contentment; the one like a slow but subtle poison, rankles through every vein, corrupts the warm stream of life, and consequently checks the refined emenations of the soul; on the contrary, the other wearies only the corporeal being, and by the simple and efficient aid of renovating sleep, acquires again its wonted elasticity.

Such proved the case with Avinzo, who long had struggled with an accumulation of opposing calamities sufficient in themselves, to bend the youthful sufferer to the ground; but now the oppression being removed, every action

seemed to acquire redoubled energy, which resembled more the peculiar interposition of heaven, than the consequent operations of the human mind.

By the return of ruddy Aurora, who

> ——— Rear'd her purple crest,
> And tiptoe stood, shaking her golden hair,
> Eager to visit the busy sons of men;—

Avinzo found himself removed to a considerable distance from the English encampment. But the surrounding country displayed a miserable picture of the horrid devastations, which are the consequent attendants on a state of warfare.

In every direction where the roving eye bent its gaze, were to be seen the cottages of the unhappy peasantry, who had fled for safety into the interior of the country; some were stripped to the bare walls, whilst others had been wantonly

razed to the ground, or consumed by the devouring flames, during the frequent inscursions of the English soldiery.

In vain did Huberto turn his regard around, not a human creature was to be seen, and with this desolate prospect surrounding him, he proceeded on his journey till after the mid-day hour, when he arrived at a few straggling habitations, some of which were still occupied by the aged or defenceless females; whose husbands, sons, or brothers, had voluntarily enlisted themselves under the banners of King Robert Bruce, to repel the invading army.

Huberto instantly proclaimed aloud, the sentiments of love he bore to the rights and liberties of Scotland; upon which he was cordially welcomed by the suffering inhabitants, and treated with the warmest affection.

After partaking of the proffered viands which were placed before him, and there reposing till the hour of curfew, he bade farewel to those homely peasants, bending his course in that direction which would ultimately lead him to the main body of the Scottish army.

In the course of the night Huberto sought the necessary repose beneath the shady covert of a friendly oak, and during the succeeding day, still continued on his march with unabating alacrity; and with such promptitude did he advance on his journey, that ere the evening of the fourth day, from its commencement, he descried, in the distance, the extended line of encampment which was occupied by the adherents of the noble King Robert Bruce.

It was at this moment that the soul of Avinzo might first be said to have felt that ardent and glowing emenation which

characterises the breast of true heroism; it was then he grasped with a noble enthusiasm, the weapon which graced his side, and unsheathing its glittering blade, he reared it to heaven, exclaiming aloud:—

"God of justice! whom I revere, if to befriend the cause of the oppressed and hurl destruction on the oppressor's head, be acceptable in thy sight; if to enlist beneath the banners of persecuted innocence, can insure the impenetrable armour of thy all-fostering protection, receive then the efforts of that being, who will struggle in the cause of an oppressed people, yielding to the superior force of a lawless ruffian band, who seek to disunite the tender bond of brotherly amity, and barter the dear liberty of Scotia and her hardy sons, for the most despicable bondage. Inspire me, great God of Arms with thy determined valour; let me amid the battle's raging fury, still rush on to scenes of glorious danger; give to

my breast the hunted tiger's fury, and nerve my arm with the lion's resistless strength; so shall I act with courage in the field, and gain that honour I aspire to emulate; for then my approving conscience will avow, that I have indelibly stamped myself the friend of virtue, innocence and truth!"

Having ended this fervent ejaculation, Huberto again advanced, and as the golden gleam of evening tinged the wide circle of the western heaven, he arrived in safety at the out-post of the Scottish army; when having been conducted, by his desire, before the officer then on duty, he demanded of him to be immediately led to that part of the encampment, where the Lord Walter had command, which request was instantly complied with, when it was known that Huberto had journeyed from the English camp; as it was supposed, that he had tidings of importance to communicate,

which would prove serviceable to the Scottish cause.

Avinzo being conducted through the camp, with an escort, was informed by the captain, that the youthful Lord Walter, had some time since been created Lord High Steward of Scotland, by King Robert Bruce. On their arrival at the tent, Huberto, after a few moments attendance, was ushered into the presence of the Lord Walter, who was seated in the tent, with several other noblemen of the Scottish army.

Avinzo's business being demanded, he instantly produced the tablet bequeathed to him by the deceased lady Macdonald, together with the ring of the stout Sir Alan. As the Lord Walter perused the contents of the scroll, various emotions displayed themselves by each change in the lineaments of his prepossessing countenance; for he could not

but remember the sufferings of the deceased Sir Alan, and the untimely death of her, who was sister to that being, who, in giving him life, had forfeited her own.

At the conclusion of the manuscript, the Lord Walter wiped away the tears that bedewed his manly countenance, and, after some conversation with the surrounding officers, in a low tone of voice, he bade Avinzo to be seated, before whom provisions were instantly placed; of which having partaken, he was requested to relate every thing circumstantially, which had the smallest reference to the deceased Sir Alan and his lady, and also the manner in which his escape from the custody of the English had been effected; with which requests Huberto complied, by giving a full narrative of every extraordinary event that had befallen him, from Sir Alan's death, to his then arrival at the Scottish camp.

The tale of Avinzo was frequently interrupted by the involuntary exclamations of his astonished auditors, who, upon its conclusion, were found to consist of the persons of King Robert Bruce, together with his brother Sir Edward; Randolph, Earl of Murray, and the Lord Douglas; who very frequently expressed his inveterate hatred to the English, in language the most contemptuous and defying.

At the termination of Huberto's story, in the course of which his firm attachment to the rightful cause of King Robert Bruce had been sufficiently explained, he was immediately taken into high favour by the Monarch, who assigned him a post of honour near his person; he was also invested with the Scottish raiments, as a mark of peculiar favour conferred upon a foreigner.

For a length of time Avinzo's deter-

mined valour became so eminently conspicuous, that it was the general theme of conversation throughout the Scottish army; in every skirmish he came off victor; he was adored by the soldiery, whose greatest pride consisted in following him to the field of battle; he became every day more distinguished by the Scottish Monarch, and was alike the bosom friend of the Lords Walter and Douglas. Thus did Huberto, from the abject condition of a dejected and friendless wanderer, suddenly attain to the highest state of preferment, enjoying the good opinion of the King and his confidential friends.

The Monarch esteemed him for his fidelity. Laird Douglas loved him for his dauntless courage and determined hatred to the English, while the youthful Lord Walter, as susceptible of feeling as he was fearless in the hour of iminent danger, gradually imbibed the most rooted friendship towards Avinzo,

who soon became his bosom friend, and the partner of his every pleasure, his every disquietude.

Thus did the radiating sun of fortune beam full upon the fate of Huberto; no transient cloud appeared to tarnish the bright ray that seemed to gild his every prospect in life. Fate seemed to have exhausted its malice, and to stamp Avinzo at once the child of fortune and of fame, till at the fatal battle of Methven, which seemed to blight the prospects of the noble Robert Bruce, he once more became with his adored Monarch and chosen adherents, a wretched outcast, an unfortunate wanderer, and with them an inmate of the gloomy Monastery of St. Columba.

CHAP. VIII.

When confidence is lost, farewell to peace,
For then suspicion clouds the noble mind;
Nor can the force of conscious virtue steel
And arm the soul against its subtle power.
It will unnerve the stoutest heart, and chace
From candour's open front the smile serene
Of sweet placidity.

BY dawn of day Huberto was awakened by the lugubre sound of the chapel bell, which summoned the fraternity of St. Columba to celebrate the matin service. He instantly quitted his rug, and on descending to the comfortless chamber wherein they had taken their repast the preceding night, he found the King and his nobles already assembled there. As no monk of the convent was then present, they were all occupied in deep

conversation; and on Avinzo's entrance, he was immediately informed that King Robert had positively determined that each of his companions, as well as himself, should assume a fictitious appellation.

This second injunction of the Monarch, and which was construed by his friends to be the effect of caution, had its source in a circumstance which still more potently actuated him: for during the preceding night his broken slumbers had been constantly assailed by visions the most portentous and appalling, and which, though not positively definable, seemed, notwithstanding, to bear a strong allusion to the monastery, wherein they had sought refuge, and of the inmates of which, from his horrid dreams, he was most pointedly cautioned to beware.

As the soul of King Robert Bruce,

had been superior on every occasion to the superstitious ideas, which so frequently tend to unnerve the mind of true heroism, the phantasms of his wandering imagination, must indeed have wrought powerfully on his soul to have led him even for a moment, to lend an attentive ear to these fictions of the brain, which did not only prompt him to this cautious mode of procedure, but also diffused a degree of melancholy, over his general demeanour that instantly became apparent to his observant friends, whose attachment to their leader, prompted them to share in a certain degree, the melancholy they observed in their King.

Having each of them fixed upon his respective title, the monarch assumed that of Sir Alexander, of Roxborough, and the appellation of Avinzo was changed to that of Sir Edred Macarden; the other fugitives having equally disguised their real appellations, the cham-

ber was shortly after entered by one of the monks who came to escort them to the chapel, in order that they might hear the celebration of mass.

The Monarch and his trusty friends followed the father in silence, who conducted them through several apartments, and after making the circuit of the cloisters, he led them to a lofty Gothic arched way, through which having passed, they ascended a flight of steps, at the summit whereof appeared, the interior of the magnificent chapel of Saint Columba's convent, which they immediately entered by one of the side portals.

After traversing the spacious aisle and passing the lofty pillars which supported the fret-worked roofing, they advanced up to the grand altar by the Nave, which afforded King Robert Bruce and his friends, an opportunity of contemplating

the beauty of this sanctified structure, as well as the regularity with which the Abbot and fraternity arranged themselves around the choir, where every thing like pomp and ceremony was apparent to enchain the mind as well as to rivet the eye of the admiring and awe-struck gazer.

To the right of the magnificent altar on an elevated chair, which resembled more a gaudy throne, than a monkish seat, reclined the person of the Abbot; before whom stood two lively boys in scarlet robes, waving to and fro large massive silver censors, that diffused the most odoriferous perfumes: beside the superior of the monastery, stood erect the tall forbidding form of his chosen friend, John of Dunbar. The numerous stalls were each occupied by a brother of the order, who seemed to have acquired this preferment, by his long and tried adherence to the rules of the community of

Saint Seoffrid, as the countenance of each of these fathers bore the marks of extreme age, mingled with a look of austerity and sullen reserve.

At the foot of each stall on the cold pavement, knelt three monks abreast, in the act of telling their beads with downcast eyes, and the semblance of humility.

On the flight of steps leading to the altar were ranged numerous youths arrayed in white flowing vestments, each bearing frankincense, and forming a kind of avenue down the middle of the choir to the large brass portals that separated it from the rest of the church.

Around two silver stands representing eagles with expanded wings, and on which were placed several large missels, stood numerous chaunters, forming the tenor part of the harmony, while in their

their rear, with arms crossed upon their breasts, appeared the monks, who sung in turn the baser parts of the service.

Upon the altar stood the blessed crucifix of purest virgin gold; and on either side blazed double rows of lofty tapers casting a dazzling gleam upon the enshrined relicks that decorated the holy table.

From the unaccountable reception the fugitives had experienced the preceding night, each was alike anxious to behold the Abbot of the monastery; and in consequence of this reciprocal desire, the eyes of each noble were instinctively fixed upon the form of the superior Gondez; yet, in whatsoever inauspicious light their fancies had been led to picture him, the reality exceeded even their ideas; for in the person of the Abbot, every trait combined at once to

enhorror the gaze of the beholders, and inspire them with mistrust.

His person, which was arrayed in the sumptuous embroidered trappings with which he was invested from his elevated station, became, from this circumstance, even more conspicuously repugnant, as his stature was considerably below the common standard, and his air diametrically opposite to every motion which characterized dignity and elegance of deportment. Yet, notwithstanding this insignificance of stature, his features were strikingly prominent, and marked with every line that pourtrays internal craft, malice, cruelty and revenge. His small piercing eyes emiting a look of malign enquiry, were bent, by turns on each of the nobles, but fixed at length on the person of the Monarch himself, the lineaments of whose manly visage he proceeded to scan with the most determined effronte-

ry; his nose, though short, was peculiarly acquiline, and gave to his general appearance an air of ferocity, which was in a great measure heightened by the cadaverous complexion of his countenance and the falling in of his cheeks, added to which, his mouth was hideously wide, round the falling extremities of which forever seemed to play the smile of mingled deceit and ineffable contempt. His chin was thickly covered with a beard short and bushy, the dye of which coincided well with the red complexion of the hair which surrounded that portion of his head, which by the rules of the order of Saint Columba, he was constantly obliged to keep closely shaven. In short, every feature of the Abbot Gondez, seemed alone framed to harrow up the soul of the observer, and present to the contemplative mind some dreadful picture, replete with sin and horror.

This forbidding figure was of course

little calculated to give a favourable turn to the train of thoughts which engrossed the mind of the Monarch, whose faithful adherents, as if conversant with the inmost workings of his soul, turned upon the countenance of King Robert Bruce, their enquiring looks, to dive, if possible, into the cogitations of his brain. While engaged in this silent contemplation the solemn ceremony commenced, when the holy strain swept in full cadence through the high vaulted avenues of the building, and at the termination of this pathetic exordium, the Abbot Gondez rising from his seat, with a constrained air of dignity, advanced slowly to the steps of the holy table, before which, after bending his knee, and crossing himself, he ascended the steps of the altar and began the celebration of the mass, during which, the choral sound sometimes issuing from the lips of the youthful performers, breathed with pathetic sweetness on the stilly breeze, and at

others joined by the baser notes of the father's, formed a full swell of the most rapturous harmony.

Huberto whose soul was now occupied only with the emotion of reverence to the Supreme Author of his existence, which the solemnity of the surrounding scene inspired, was really unconscious of every object that presented itself, and consequently, paid no attention to the fixed regard of an emaciated father, who knelt at the entrance of the stall near which he had placed himself, till a deep and heavy sigh from this observant monk at length aroused him; when turning his regard, he instantly felt a thrilling emotion pervade his whole frame, in contemplating the person of the prostrate figure beside him.

The person of the father on whom Huberto rivetted his eyes, was from his general appearance stricken in years; a

few white hairs yet silvered his head, and a flowing beard of snowy tint fell in graceful waves upon his breast.

His stature was tall but wasted, and his features displayed that irresistable something, which although inexpressible, never fails to rivet the attention, and forcibly act upon the generous and sympathetic soul of virtue.

It was altogether that species of figure and physiognomy, which seemed to indicate, not only the oppressive weight of bodily infirmity, which is the consequent attendant of old age, but the more poignant suffering which arises from a rooted malady of the mind.

On observing that Avinzo's gaze was intently fixed upon his features, the monk immediately averted from him his regard, while Huberto, prompted by an irresistable impulse, still continued the scrutinising perusal of the father's pa-

thetic and impressive countenance, during which, the monk frequently bent a momentary glance upon Avinzo, but as instantaneously averted from him his eyes, on perceiving that he himself still continued to be the object of the youth's enquiring attention.

Thus occupied, Huberto suffered for a time that devotion to subside, which was due to heaven alone, and with which his entranced soul had been so recently inspired: but the divine enthusiasm again revived, and he continued his orisons with the same unaffected ardency till the termination of the matin service, when his eyes once more met in contact with those of the monk, who from his embarrassed manner on this occasion, had been to all appearance occupied for a length of time in the contemplation of his features.

The fathers arose and sung together

the concluding anthem, and then with slow and measured steps quitted the chapel, forming a procession, in the midst of which passed on the Abbot Gondez, immediately followed by his adopted friend John of Dunbar, while the youthful choristers, still joining their melting tones, brought up the rear, singing in solemn chorus.

Beside the Scottish Monarch and his friends, still continued the lay father, who had previously conducted them into the chapel; an irresistable impulse actuated the mind of Huberto at the precise moment when the monk passed him who had so peculiarly arrested his attention during the celebration of the service; and turning to the father who attended them, he requested to be made acquainted with the name of that monk; to which the lay friar replied with some reluctance, acquainting Huberto that his name was father Anthony, adding,

with a look of malign contempt—"And he is the outcast of the whole fraternity."

Avinzo felt indignant at the friar's conclusive observation; the blood for an instant tinged his open countenance, and he measured with a disdainful eye the person of the communicant; he was on the point of making a replication to the father, which would have been attended with all the acrimony of Avinzo's soul; but fortunately, prudence with her steady hand checked him in this passionate career, and he therefore contented himself with indicating by his looks, the full force of his feelings, which failed not in their effects upon the mind of the monk; who abashed, immediately withdrew his regard, and bending his scowling eyes to earth, felt in the bitterness of his soul, both rage and hatred, towards the object who had so reproved his meanness and malignity.

The procession having passed into the cloisters, the lay father descended the steps of the choir, and in silence led the Monarch and his friends into the monastery, who were shortly after ushered into a large anti-room, adjoining to the refectory, where the monks were already seated, in order to partake of the morning's repast.

Into this chamber was shortly after brought the provision for the strangers, of which King Robert Bruce, and his friends partook in silence, being restrained from conversing by the constant attendance of some one of the fraternity, who appeared to present themselves only as spies upon the words and actions of their guests.

After having concluded this comfortless meal, just as they were on the point of rising from the board, in order to consider in private what were the mea-

sures most expedient to be adopted at this most critical juncture, they were suddenly frustrated in their intention by the entrance of the monk John of Dunbar, who immediately advancing to King Robert Bruce, desired that he would accompany him to the chamber of the Abbot; with this request the Monarch silently acquiesced, and with a slight inclination of the head, instantly followed the steps of the father, while the mind of each friend of the King, experienced an unaccountable dejection, at this address of the monk being so particularly made to the King himself, when there was nothing in his general appearance to authorize this pointed conduct towards him.

While his friends were individually occupied with the conjectures which this idea gave birth to, the noble Sovereign of Scotland, was conducted through numerous chambers, and damp cold avenues, by the

monk John of Dunbar; who at length halted at a door-way, when sounding a small brass bell, a voice from within bade him enter, upon which the portal was thrown open and the Monarch instantly found himself in the presence of the Superior, Gondez.

The Abbot was seated directly opposite the entrance of the chamber, on a cushion of crimson velvet, while his right elbow rested on the arm of the chair, with his cheek reclined upon his hand and his eyes stedfastly fixed on the form before him.

Having thus eyed the King for some seconds, the Superior at length, very abruptly, broke silence, by putting the following interrogatory to the expectant Monarch:

"What is thy name?"

—"I am a knight, and Sir Alexander of Roxborough, is my name;" replied the King sternly.

"If I mistake not, yourself and companions here were defeated by King Edward at Methven fight, were ye not?" continued the Abbot, with a look that would fain have read the inmost workings of King Robert's soul.

"We were, most reverend Sir," answered the King.

"And to Oranza's Isle, ye steered for safety and concealment, is it not so?" resumed the Superior.

"We did most holy father;" was the reply.

"Then have ye done wrong," interrupted the Abbot, with extreme acrimony, his countenance assuming at the

same moment a hellish scowl, which after a few seconds, gradually changed to a grin of malignant contempt, when he proceeded in his harangue, as follows:—

"Where could have been the love, duty, respect, and loyalty which was due to the magnanimous and renowned King Robert Bruce, that thus ye abandoned him in the hour of necessity? Where was your love to the rights of Scotland, and its persecuted clans? If such be a specimen of your loyalty, Scotland may shortly own King Edward for its lord; and its wretched inhabitants groan beneath the English yoke. I therefore tell ye, Sir Knight, 'twere better ye had sought some other than Oronza's Isle, to shelter your renegade persons. Think you that we convert our house of sanctity, into the vile receptacle of fugitive and disloyal knights. The very thought alone harrows up my soul, it savours so of profaneness.

[redacted] and much too often

The Abbot would have still proceeded in his harangue, but the indignant Monarch, stung to the very soul at this flagrant and unjust rebuke, reiterated with vehemence, "Disloyal and renegades! that ever I should live to hear such an accusation, and from a mortal tongue.—Sir Abbot, learn to understand us better; we scorn your taunt, being no renegades, but men of tried integrity; men of loyalty and soldiers, that have stoutly fought it inch by inch, against the cursed oppression of the English Chief."

"Where is your King?" interrupted the Superior, in a dissonant tone of voice, rendered inarticulate by rage; and partly rising from his seat while vivid lightnings seemed to dart from his malignant eyes. To which interrogation the Monarch, with a calm air of dignity which had in it something almost supernatural, and which he had, at that mo-

moment, I conjure you, the assumed anger which was so lately manifest in me; for trust me, Sir Knight, I did it but to solve the mystery of your presence here, and now I *know* ye well for what ye are."

King Robert Bruce bowed his head in silence as the Abbot pronounced these conciliatory words, which were, however, delivered with such a peculiar emphasis as rather tended to augment than cancel the mistrust he harboured respecting the character and secret intentions of the Superior, Gondez, who again spoke to the following effect:—

" I conjure you be as our brothers here; command, and ye shall be obeyed in every thing this monastery can afford ye; and when the forces of King Robert Bruce shall once more rally round his unfurled banner, and make head against the invading Edward's arms; then, Sir

Knight, ye shall have safe escort hence, with fatherly counsel, and our holy benediction."

The Superior having thus expressed himself, King Robert, in a laconic reply, returned thanks conjointly for himself and his friends, for the profferred good wishes of the Abbot Gondez, and then retired from the Superior's presence, leaving the Abbot with his confidential friend, John of Dunbar, to ruminate on the manners of the Scottish King; who felt himself secure under the assumed title of Sir Alexander of Roxborough.

As the Monarch slowly retraced his steps, the train of his ideas led him to form several conclusions by no means favourable to the Abbot, or gratifying to the generous soul of the Scottish King.

"No," said he, internally, "it was

but the assumed air of affability practised to entrap me into some intended snare; but I will not be lulled by specious friendship into self-security, nor pass away my hours within these walls in conscious surety. No, for on my soul hypocrisy lurked beneath those transient smiles, and I must, therefore, ward in secret against the worst that may befall me. Circumspection becomes absolutely essential, and I am compelled to counteract his deceit, by wearing myself the detested mask of hypocrisy; or else to escape these walls, will, I fear, prove utterly impracticable.—Yet, why detain us?—What purpose can it answer? unless, indeed, my proper rank be known, and treason is at work:"—The Monarch started at the supposition; and, agonized with the conflicting thoughts it had awakened in his breast, rejoined in meditating his expectant friends, who felt eased of a burthen that had individually oppressed them since their Monarch's departure.

King Robert Bruce immediately re-rired with his trusty adherents into the cloisters of the monastery, where, free from all observation, he recapitulated the context of the late discourse which had taken place between himself and the Abbot Gondez.—The information much suprised his attentive auditors, who became impressed with the same ideas as the King himself had been, immediately after his interview with the Superior.

Having requested that they would severally deliver their opinions on the subject, each made known the apprehension that arose in his mind, so precisely accordant with those of the Sovereign, and concluded by advising that some endeavours should be speedily made to escape the island of Oronza, wherein the person of the beloved Robert Bruce, did not appear to them to be secure from the secret machination of the Abbot and his creatures.

The King then desired that each of his friends would keep a watchful eye upon the inmates of the convent, but more especially on any proceedings which they might notice in the monk John of Dunbar; he next particularly requested that they would appear as little as possible to confer together; and the Monarch concluded by stating, that the better to mask any intentions they might have, it would be judicious in them to remain separated as much as possible.

In this request of the King's they all cheerfully acquiesced, when the conversation broke up, and they severally strolled through different avenues of the building, except the Scottish Monarch, and his brother Sir Edward Bruce, who continued for some time occupied in interesting conversation, relative to the then situation of the kingdom, and the plans that should be adopted to procure the necessary information relative to the assembling

of his adherents, and the fixing on some point where they might once more rally in order to try the hazardous chance of war.

Having come to a determination on many very material points, they parted; and following the plan adopted by their friends, severally bent their lonely steps through the chambers or garden of the convent.

CHAP. IX.

——————————If it be so,
Let grandams tales be chronicled as true,
For none will dare dispute them.

What sophistry is this, that would unman
My loyalty unto the best of Kings,
Write traitor on my heart, and make my soul
The fawning bondsman of my perfidy?
Deceiver hence; thy labour is but vain;
I soar above thy paltry artifice.

W. H. I.

AVINZO, during the morning bent his thoughtful steps through the winding avenues of the garden, which were completely environed on every side with lofty walls; yet, although the serenity of the day rendered the air peculiarly inviting, still not a monk appeared to enjoy the calm scene which procreative nature displayed on every side; frequently would the form of father Anthony obtrude

itself upon Huberto's creative fancy, and as often did he wish for that father's presence who, he had led himself to believe, was the only sincere votary at the shrine of Saint Columba. How strange, thought Avinzo, that any set of individuals should yield to this state of misanthropy; as if the expansive page of the universe, the system of worlds, and the knowledge of these, of themselves, and of their maker, was not preferable to the cogitations of the gloomy cell.

Why does man boast the possession of a mind, when he every day voluntarily neglects its cultivation; instead of arrogating to himself any peculiar benefit that might arise from thence, he rather strives to render himself ridiculous by making boast of that which he rarely carries into execution. Our continued practice is the arraignment of Providence for evils of our own creating, and which too

frequently arises from the neglect of our intellectual endowments.

No pursuit, continued Avinzo, can possibly afford satisfaction, which has not its source in the mind; and perfectly to enjoy monastic seclusion, the mind must be at ease, which very rarely is the case; as the soul of those who are termed religion's votaries, are, generally speaking, either swayed by ambition, bigotry, or selfish desires; and, in such cases, the mind is warped, and its freedom bartered for the most disgraceful pursuits.

In this train of ideas did Avinzo spend the hours, sincerely hoping to meet the monk Anthony; but the morning passed on without presenting to his eyes that reverend father.

During the evening Huberto bent his wandering steps through the interior of

the monastery, when he became astonished at its extent; sometimes he traversed lofty chambers, which communicated with others of the same magnitude; and at other times he entered long corridors, from whence branched off a multiplicity of rooms, most of which were wholly unoccupied; at length he found himself in that chamber which was appropriated for the reception of the numerous charters, deeds, and manuscripts belonging to the convent.

Here Huberto paused, and, after looking at several parchment rolls and ancient emblazoned folios, the beauty of which greatly interested him, he was just on the point of retiring from the chamber, when, almost obscured by the collected dust that covered it, a vellum roll caught his attention, which was suspended by a tarnished chain of gold, within a narrow dark niche in the wall of the chamber.

Prompted by curiosity, Huberto unhooked the manuscript, which proved, upon inspection, to be poetical, and very curiously emblazoned down the margin, while at the top appeared a very extraordinary illumination, the subject of which consisted of two figures, the one bearing the appearance of a most hideous demon, and the other that of an affrighted old woman, in a red mantle, who, struggling with the fiend, seemed anxiously endeavouring to disengage herself from its forked talons.

This unaccountable drawing aroused Avinzo's curiosity, who, in consequence, determined on the immediate perusal of the poem; having, therefore, cleansed the manuscript from its dust, and seated himself near the lofty casement, through which the declining sun darted with peculiar lustre, he bent his eyes upon the inscription, which appeared in large characters at the head of the poem, and ran as follows:—

LEGEND

OF THE

LITTLE RED WOMAN,

WRITTEN BY THE

MONK INGULPHUS,

AT THE

Instigation of that Holy Father and Ghostly Confessor,

GERONIMO,

Abbot of the Monastery of Saint Columba, in the Island of Oronza;

Wherein was displayed this Bloody Tragedy, in the Year of Grace 1152.

PART THE FIRST.

THE Little Old Woman was cloathed in red,
On a three-legged stool she sat;
She mutter'd, and something this old woman said;
She mumbled, and mumbled, and thrice shook her head,
And look'd on her ugly black cat.

This Little Red Woman, was grim to behold,
More ugly, than sin in a rage;
Her face was all wrinkled, for she was quite old,
Her skin hung about her, in many a fold;
Full ninety and nine was her age.

The meagre black cat, had a ravenous eye,
The ribs through the skin did appear;
And piercing and strange was this animal's cry,
As it squatted, the little red woman hard by;
The like, mortal never did hear.

From under her cloak this old woman then drew
Her hand, that was skinny and brown;
And blood did the old woman's fingers bedew,
For hellish the deeds were this beldam would do,
And terribly grim was her frown.

Her hand the pale head of a dead infant bore,
Thick blood from the neck clotted fell;
'Twas the head of a babe, which at midnight she tore,
From sepulchre, dreary, she lov'd to explore;
Her soul she had given to hell.

And now from the sockets she tore forth the eyes,
And gorg'd on the damp livid skin;
And dreadful it then was to hear the cat's cries,
Till the old woman threw it, the half-devour'd prize
She ate, yet was ugly and thin.

This Little Red Woman suck'd infants' pure blood,
And, living, she'd steal them away;
Hearts, livers, and eyes, was this old woman's food,
And those she lov'd best, which had "long'd to the good;"
The devil she thus did obey.

But now came the time that her bond did expire,
Which, with her own blood, she had sign'd;
The Little Red Woman still felt some desire
To live free from torments, and hell's parching fire,
And dread now 'gan seize on her mind.

To pray was in vain, for her God she denied,
To convent she much fear'd to go,
For Jesu, this Little Red Woman defied;
And Mary the Virgin, all Christian soul's pride:
Now what must this old woman do?

She thought, and she thought, while her cat ey'd her well,
The old woman felt much affright;
For Vinegar Tom could her inmost thoughts tell,
Though cat to the eye, 'twas a foul fiend of hell
That watch'd her, by day and by night.

From her three-legged stool the Red Woman uprose,
The cat trotted on at her side;
'Twas evening, and forth to the lone wood she goes,
And oft on the black cat a side glance she throws
And curses what late was her pride.

That night, and next day, was the old beldam free,
The after-midnight sealed her fate;
For aged one hundred this woman would be,
And such the agreement was sign'd on her knee,
'Fore Beelzebub, seated in state.

And now Saint Columba's rich turrets appear,
The convent was grand to behold;
But the nearer she came encreas'd was her fear,
Her eyes the Red Woman scarce dar'd to uprear,
Her terrors encreased seven-fold.

And now to the lofty old gate-way she came,
When, lo! there she halted awhile;
As when ague fit seizes, so trembled her frame,
She felt all the terrors of guilt and of shame;
So feel they whom guilt do defile.

The little Red Woman knock'd once, but in vain;
Her soul 'gan with horror to quake:
Her heart it throbb'd quick, burning hot was her brain,
The blow she repeated again, and again;
The lofty arch'd portal did shake.

At length came a father, he peep'd through the grate,
"What wou'd'st thou old woman," quod he?
"I prythee, good father, straight open the gate,
I'd speak with the abbot, for hard is my fate:
Your holy superior I'd see."

And now the monk open'd the portal full wide;
She, tremblingly, entered therein;
The meagre black cat still kept close at her side,
And into the covent thus quickly did glide,
Which ne'er had contain'd so much sin.

"And wilt thou conduct me?" the old woman said;
"And wilt thou straight lead me the way;"
"Oh! yes, little woman, all cloathed in red,
So light thro' the chambers thy foot-steps thou'lt tread,
Thy wishes anon I'll obey."

So soft thro' the porter's small chamber they creep,
And there in an old elbow chair,
A father was laying absorb'd in sound sleep;
Sometimes he snor'd sonorous, and sometimes full deep;
He felt neither sorrow or care.

They traverse the cloisters, they traverse the hall,
And pass thro' the chambers full high;
And there many monks rested 'gainst the cold wall,
For sleep did the senses of each man enthrall;
Each monk snor'd aloud, "Lullaby."

END OF THE FIRST PART.

LEGEND

OF THE

LITTLE RED WOMAN.

PART THE SECOND.

AND now they arriv'd at the good Abbot's cell;
The Father knock'd once at the ring;
Then thrice pull'd the chain of the little brass bell,
The clapper thrice beat, and thrice sounded the knell,
Quod the Abbot "what news do'st thou bring?"

"'Tis I, Father Jerome," the porter then said,
"An old woman fain wou'd come in;"
Quoth the Abbot "my soul sinks with terror and dread,
Say, is not the penitent cloathed in red?
And wrinkled and swarthy her skin?"

Quod Jerome, "good Abbot, a saint you must be,
The truth, without seeing to tell;
For red is the mantle as low as her knee,
And red is her kirtle, and ugly is she;
I never saw mortal so fell."

" Go hence, trusty Jerome," the Abbot then cried,
" This sinner I'll straightway confess;"
The porter obey'd, while the red woman tried
To banish her terrors, but this was denied,
She felt not her horrors the less.

And now the old Abbot his chamber pac'd round;
He stalk'd it about and about;
His arms they were folded, his eyes bent to ground,
And something he mutter'd, but faint was the sound;
The old woman naught could make out.

Anon to the door did the Abbot advance,
He op'd it, and in march'd the dame;
She first ey'd the father, and then look'd askance,
Beside her still Vinegar Tom met her glance;
She trembled with terror and shame.

The Abbot then sat himself down in his chair;
" Approach now, old woman," said he;
" Come, kneel down beside me, confess all your care,
Your cruelty, witchcraft, each sin straight declare;
Your soul is in dread jeopardy."

The Red Woman trembled, and faultered awhile,
At length she began to impart,
How often sweet babies she used to beguile,
How every commandment of God she'd defile,
How satan was lord of her heart.

The Abbot look'd grimly, the sinner turn'd white,
The father bent on her his eye;
She trembled, and palsied, she shrunk from his sight,
Each glance every hope of her soul seem'd to blight,
And told her that fate cast the dye.

"And must I not pray, Father Abbot?" she said,
To Jesu and blessed Marie?
No, no," cried the Abbot, thrice shaking his head,
"'Tis I, little woman, must pray in your stead,
For useless thy praying would be."

Anon toll'd the curfew, and then drew in night,
Quod the Dame "good Sir Abbot I pray;
Oh, speak! should I not tell the beads in your sight,
My soul is all horror, I'm palsied with fright;"
"No prayer," quod the Monk, "may you say."

Now loudly and slowly the convent bell beat;
"'Tis eleven, "the old woman cried;
For mercy, Sir Abbot, pray on I entreat,
That so I may Satan's fell purpose defeat;"
Still closer she crept to his side.

Now steal on the minutes by one, two, and three;
They steal on by six, seven, and eight;
The Red Woman trembled, like leaf on a tree,
While nearer she drew to the old Abbot's knee,
For greatly she dreaded her fate.

The quarter, the half hour, the three-quarter's toll,
The moment's glide swiftly away;
No longer the Abbot her tongue cou'd controul;
She cried, "mercy, Jesu, redeem my lost soul,
Or foul fiends will snatch it away."

And now the bell sends forth a loud brazen knell;
It toll'd four times, one, two, and three;
It warn'd the red dame that 'twas midnight so fell,
The hour when her vile soul was sentenc'd to hell;
"Oh! mercy, Sir Abbot?" quod she.

Oh! yes, I'll have mercy!" the Abbot replied,
As quickly he sprang from the seat;
"Thou fain would'st have strove thy dread Lord to deride,
And shun thine own patron, but this was denied;
I knew and prevented the cheat."

"Yes, beldame, no longer my power you'll defy,
Your master now stands in your sight;
'Twas I charm'd the monks, and they snor'd lullaby;
A fiend was thy porter, the devil am I,
Prepare for the regions of night.

These words scarce were ended, when down dropp'd the cowl,
The vestments all vanished away,
And Vinegar Tom sent a hideous howl,
And straight was transform'd to a fiend grim and foul,
Prepar'd his dread Lord to obey.

Slow faded the form, which the devil had ta'en,
When, lo! in its stead did appear,
The figure of Satan, with long tail and mane,
Sharp claws were his hands, to inflict hellish pain,
And slowly his form he 'gan rear.

His colour was black, and his eyes globes of fire,
His mouth sent forth sulphur and smoke;
His teeth red hot spikes, grinning ghastly and dire,
His stature was high as the convent's rich spire,
Like thunder his voice, when he spoke.

His middle a girdle of snakes did entwine,
From whose jaws ran brimstone and blood;
Red blotches, like meteors upon him did shine,
Each foot had sharp claws to the number of nine,
Wherewith he oft tortured the good.

Then forth from his girdle the parchment he drew,
He rais'd it, and cried "prythee see!
Here's the bond stain'd with blood, the deed sign'd by you;"
The Red Woman shrieked, for the signet she knew,
"So come, little woman with me."

She screamed, and she ran, but the devil so fell
His claw stuck within her crook'd back;
He rais'd her, he whirl'd her, and then with a yell
Plung'd down, fathoms deep, in the regions of hell;
She's tortur'd with scorpions and rack.

And now being ended the devil's dire charm,
Each monk from his trance did arise;
They felt nought of terror, they knew nought of harm,
But sung midnight vespers quite free from alarm;
'Tis thus with the good and the wise.

Thus ended the old woman cloathed in red;
Again on her stool she ne'er sat;
Nor mumbled her curses, nor shook her bald head,
For since on her entrails the demon hath fed,
That once was her ugly black cat.

Know, pious reader, that once in every year the tortured spirit of the Little Red Woman revisits Oronza's monastery, at the hour of midninght; and, yelling, flies around the cloisters from the pursuing fiend. Good Christians! pray for her soul's repose.

Thus terminated the terrifying legend of the little red woman, which so completely entranced the mind of Avinzo, that he paid no attention to any thing that occurred in the chamber: and in this state of mental astonishment, did he continue till the movement of something near him aroused his attention: when elevating his regard from off the manuscript whereon his eyes had been intently fixed, he beheld before him the tall and forbidding form of the Monk John of Dunbar; a mysterious gloom clouded his prominent features, his dark eyes rolled, emitting an expression fraught with horror, and his arms partly enshrouded in the folds of his drapery, were crossed upon his breast.

Huberto gazed upon the Monk, but his look did not tend to abash the father, who still continued to contemplate the features of Avinzo's, who, at length arose, and winding up the parch-

ment scroll, proceeded to replace it in the niche from whence he had taken it. Huberto, without noticing the father, was upon the point of quitting the chamber, but the deep toned voice of the monk suddenly arrested him in his course, and thus bespoke him:—

"Young man, thy solitary steps have led thee into that part of the monastery, which is sacred to its votaries alone. Thy curiosity calls forth a rebuke, since in this chamber, are deposited those documents which concern our rules and ordinances, many of which, it were a sacrilege for temporal eyes to inspect."

Huberto with becoming diffidence, replied.

"If I have offended reverend Sir, I crave your pardon for the error; as my steps were hitherward bent, without the smallest intention of prying into those documents to which you allude;

neither have I aught perused, save the contents of that vellum scroll, whereon you must have observed me occupied on your entrance into the chamber."

The monk after a pause of some moments, replied :—

"'Tis enough, I admit of the excuse; but let this, I charge you, be the last intrusion here."

"I shall remember the injunction," answered Avinzo, who, with an inclination of the head, was passing the form of the father, when, on a sudden, he found his arm seized by the monk, who thus bespoke him.

"I would confer with thee, young man, for there is something so prepossessing in thy person and manners that prompts me to befriend thy inexperienced years with my good wishes, and fatherly council."

"I own the obligation thus conferred

upon me," answered Avinzo, in a tone of reserve.

"Thy youthful age" resumed the father," is but ill calculated to meet the rude assaults of war. Has religion no charm to rivet thy soul's attachment? Has the contemplation of certain happiness in the world to come, no talisman to wean thee from temporal affairs, and make thee live for heaven alone?"

"I reverence the Deity, and the religious code which must insure that happiness, which you contemplate," returned Avinzo; "but fate has called me into active life, and it is therefore incumbent on me as rigidly to fulfil my avocations, as it is your pride to act up to the duties of christianity."

"Thou hast befriended the cause of King Robert Bruce," answered the monk, and he is now become an outcast without a hope of retrieve; where is then

thy loyalty? what avails thy individual efforts, in a struggle where ill fate has already cast the die?" As the monk thus expressed himself, he bent on Avinzo a glance accompanied with a sneer, on alluding to the misfortunes of King Robert Bruce; the action was not unobserved by Huberto, whose indignant soul spurned the base suggestions of the father; though the voice of prudence happily expanded her influence over his breast, and he consequently replied:—

"The necessity to which the Monarch is reduced, wheresoever he may be, is in itself a sufficient reason for me to remain true to my integrity, and the cause I have espoused."

"Suppose," interrupted John of Dunbar, "that high preferment were given thee in the church, would it not compensate for thy relinquishment of that

cause where all thy endeavours are unattended with success?"

"Never," answered Avinzo hastily; "the whole world combined, should not lead me to swerve from the interests of the unfortunate King, or induce me to act in any way unbecoming of that line of conduct which it has hitherto been my pride to adopt."

The features of John of Dunbar, assumed a dissatisfied air as Avinzo concluded the last sentence; he bent for a time a scowling look upon his person, but Huberto bowing, bade the father farewell. The monk again folded his arms across, and averting his gaze to earth, proceeded with thoughtful steps to pace the chamber, while Avinzo, happy to be released from a conversation so truly disgusting to him, quickly left the library, and bent his steps towards the cloisters.

CHAP. X.

Prognosticks still, and tales mysterious;
With actions that appal the soul; arise,
To daunt my manhood.

——— 'Tis a bird foreboding death.
Ravens in flight will scent the fumes of blood,
They are the ministers of midnight hags
That oft against the sick man's casement flap:
Sure token of his doom.

W. H. I.

THE intrusion of the monk John of Dunbar, and the extraordinary conference which took place between Avinzo and the father, absorbed for a time every other consideration in the mind of Huberto, till the recollection of the Legend of the Little Red Woman, again forcibly rivetted his thoughts, nor could he repress a secret desire to be himself

a witness of the annual appearance of the condemned spirit and pursuing fiend, though from the neglectful manner in which the Legend was obviously preserved, Huberto rather conjectured that the information conveyed in the sequel of the poem, was but a new chimera of the brain, originating in the poet's fancy; who, to add more horror to the relation, had consequently concluded it with the assertion alluded to; as, from the date of the performance, upwards of a century had transpired, for the greater part of which, it appeared very probable, that the Legend had remained altogether unnoticed; which, Avinzo conceived, would not have been the case, had the spirit regularly revisited the cloisters annually, according to the poet's assertion.

Still ruminating on the strange relation, Huberto became wholly unconscious of the lapse of time, till the last

radiance of evening having vanished gave place to the embrowning hue of twilight, which just began to spread its misty mantle over the still bosom of the earth.

Avinzo warned by this of the quick approach of night, rose from the stone seat in the cloisters whereon he had placed himself, and with folded arms, unconsciously ascended the flight of steps, and passed the portal communicating with the interior of the church, which he immediately entered, and advanced along the aisle with slow and measured step.

There are seasons when the human intellect soaring above the level of common ideas, wings its ærial flight through the expanded regions of fancy, and seems for a time removed from every sublunary thought; it is not the studied endeavour on our parts that

can produce this extraordinary transition; for the very actions and words which have at one moment given rise to it, will wholly fail in their effect, when put a second time in force. Huberto's mind was by no means cast in the common mould of nature; she had not been partially lavish in her gifts, for the noble lineaments of his countenance, and the symmetry of his shape were the indexes of a soul framed for honour, virtue, and immutable truth.

The strange vicissitudes of Avinzo's youthful life, and the constant scene of action in which he had been engaged, only tended to inspire him with redoubled energy when he found his mental qualifications called into action.

It was, therefore, this contrariety of events that might well be supposed to raise in his brain those chimeras, which

never disturb the man who plods contentedly in the common paths of life; he may, indeed, be said to enjoy tranquility, but it is that species of pleasure which never soars above a certain specific medium; it is the mind of fire that can alone kindle into rapturous enthusiasm, engendering phantasies, which never occur to the worldly individual.

In the present instance, the mind of Avinzo was assailed with many contending emotions. His thoughts being alternately occupied in forming schemes that might prove beneficial to his Monarch; in contemplating the past vicissitudes of his extraordinary life, and in sometimes yielding to fear, from existing circumstances; while at others, his mind was elevated by soothing hope to augur the speedy termination of every surrounding difficulty.

It was this contrariety of ideas, added

to the warm glow of esteem he had imbibed towards father Anthony, and the effect of the late appalling legend, which imperceptibly presented itself to his mind's eye, as he paced along the vaulted avenues of this sainted edifice. Huberto at length passed through the gateway which conducted to one of the smaller chapels, of which, there were several in each aile, and seating himself on the flight of steps leading to the altar, he reclined his cheek upon his hand, and then fixed his pensive gaze full upon the lofty painted casement before him.

The solemn silence that reigned around the hallowed sanctuary which Avinzo had chosen for his awful meditations, together with the dingy hue of twilight which had now succeeded the last bright gleam of sinking day, giving a kind of dim lustre to the trembling flame, that burned in the silver lamp hanging before the crucifix; all those

objects conspired at once to fill the meditative Huberto with the most lugubre ideas, to which, he imperceptibly yielded, till an exertion of reason suddenly dispelled the gloom: when rising from the step, he ascended to the altar, and prostrating himself before the shrine, offered up a fervent prayer to heaven; but when Avinzo began in particular to address the Divinity, in behalf of the unfortunate Scottish Monarch, so truly revered, he could not refrain from pausing, and casting his eyes towards the casement, he saw, on one of the iron bars, a melancholy owl, which had at that precise juncture took its station there, while, at the same moment, a death portending raven screamed aloud its ominous song.

" *For 'twas* the very witching time of night,
When church-yards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world."

These objects for a few moments,

broke Huberto's regular chain of ideas, and diffused a chilling horror over the workings of his mind, but calling religion to his aid, he once more fixed his eyes upon the brazen representation of the world's dying Redeemer, and thus continued his devout prayer.

"Who but thou is omniscient? from whom but thee all gracious Father of Mercy proceed the multifarious blessings we enjoy? who but thee can bring to light the hidden scene of death, confound the villain and reward the just? who save, thee, can shield the churl beneath his humble thatch, and guard him from the machinations of canopied oppression?

'Tis thou canst raise the Monarch to his throne, or hurl him to destruction. In thy all fostering hand therefore, now rests the cause of him I serve; the rightful claim of Scotia's Monarch, who

seeks his dear country's freedom to guard his people from lawless oppression; and whose thirst is to act up to thy divine precepts, and live in all good men's hearts—shield then, O! shield the King, omniscient Father."

As Huberto uttered the conclusive exclamation, his extended right hand rested upon the entablature, directly beneath the crucifix, when, instantaneously, something damp, heavy, and icy cold, dropped upon it from above, which thrilled the warm pulses of his heart. On raising his regard to the cross, the lamp before it appeared to burn steadily, but it cast a sickly, blueish gleam around, by which the enhorror'd Avinzo was able to discern a stream of blood, that gushed from the indented wound in the side of the brass figure, of the crucified Redeemer; three large drops of which had fallen upon and stained his hand; the owl at that moment more

dismally hooted, and the black raven rung a screeching peal that reverberated through every aile of the spacious edifice.

Huberto started from his prostrate position; he felt the warm current of his youthful blood flow with impetuosity to his heaving heart; his knees trembled beneath his petrified frame, which they with difficulty supported; and his locks stood bristling round his brow, no longer shading those eyes which now rolled with all the expression of ghastly horror.

After a few seconds, Avinzo's eyes were once more raised to the cross, but all appearance of the streaming blood was vanished, and to his utter astonishment, that hand so lately tinged with gore was now quite free from stain.

Huberto remained for some minutes collecting his scattered senses. He at

first conceived that all the preceding scene might have been only an imaginary coinage of the brain; but the more he recurred to each particular incident, the more he became assured that the whole was a reality, and from its particular appearance at the very moment when his intercession was so strenuously offered at the Throne of Mercy, for King Robert Bruce, Huberto was compelled, however painful the suggestion might be to his soul, to allow that it obviously portended something dreadful towards the Monarch, which idea had no sooner taken possession of his mind, than as if to yield assent to the supposition, the owl and raven once more joined their dismal peal, and instantly flapping to and fro their hoary wings, made a way towards the dusky shade of the adjoining wood.

The horrible sound again attracted the regard of Avinzo, who fixing his eyes upon the casement, immediately started

back some paces, for through the storied glass of the window, he beheld the very countenance of one of the ugly hags who had so mystically prognosticated to him in the ruined cells of the castle, while journeying from London to the Scottish borders.

The visage of this hag appeared, if possible, more loathsome than at his first *rencontre* with her; while the knob of the black crutch which she grasped within her bony fingers was pressed upon her skinny, bloodless lips; her haggard, sunken eyes being all the time immutably rivetted on those of the terror-struck youth.

Huberto at length assuming sufficient fortitude advanced to the very base of the altar, without once averting his look from that of the dreadful object before him, when in a solemn tone of voice he thus bespoke the mystic intruder:—

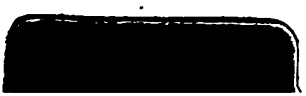
"In the name of that Almighty Power I reverence, answer me to what I shall demand.— Why are thy steps thus bent on pursuing me; wherefore comest thou to me at this strange season to break upon my meditations; from whence proceeded the strange and horrid sight which did of late appal my senses.— Speak to me, I conjure thee, and if thou canst, resolve this mystery, and confide to me what all these sights portend?"

Avinzo ceased to speak, and for some seconds the hag continued silent, when she at length in a shrill tone of voice answered simply thus:—"Blood, blood, Huberto, nought but blood!"

Night came on with rapid pace, for the last dubious gleam of light lingered in misty majesty on the expansive horizon of the Western Ocean; while the sable goddess already reigning o'er the eastern hemisphere, came on with horrid

stride, and 'rayed in ebon robe, proudly strove to hold her still and dismal empire over the face of sleeping nature. It was some time ere Avinzo thought of quitting the chapel, when warned by the rapid approach of darkness, he prepared to retrace his steps into the cloisters, and passing through the brazen portals by which he had entered this small sanctuary, he found himself in the aile, down which he was slowly proceeding, when, upon gaining one of the huge and massive pillars which supported the roofing of the building, and which concealed the nave of the chapel from observation, he paused for a few seconds in deep meditation, but again advancing, the tread of footsteps suddenly struck upon his ear, and, at the same moment, a monk darted from behind the pillar with the utmost precipitation; on perceiving Huberto, the intruder made a sudden halt, and after eyeing him for a few seconds with the most scrutinizing atten-

tion, the father seized Avinzo's arm, exclaiming emphatically as he did it "Murder and Treason;" then loosening his hold, the monk fled with the utmost speed, and ere the astonished youth could collect himself, vanished from his sight with the rapidity of lightning.

The form of the stranger, which was tall, was completely enveloped in the ample monastick garments that flowed loosely around him; his countenance being altogether obscured from the eye of observation in consequence of the cowl being cast over his brow. There was an obvious perturbation in the whole demeanour of the intruder which was instantly apparent to Avinzo, and the tremulous manner with which he had seized his arm, coincided but too well with the mystic and dreadful words which had escaped his lips with so much energetic expression.

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